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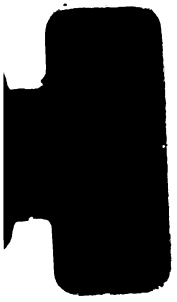

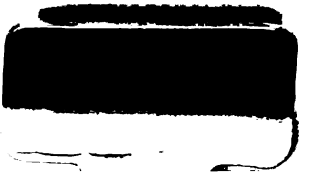

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A DANGEROUS MOMENT

The "Victoria" was flying almost above the troop of horsemen who were riding with loose reins after Joe. The doctor in the front of the car held the ladder extended, ready to launch it at the proper moment. Joe still kept about fifty feet ahead of his pursuers. The "Victoria" passed them.

"Attention!" cried Samuel to Kennedy.

"I am ready."

"Joe, look out!" cried the doctor in a ringing voice, as he threw down the ladder, whose lowest rounds dragged up the dust as they fell.

At the doctor's summons, Joe, without checking his horse, turned round. The ladder was close to him, and in a moment he had caught it.—Page 364.

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WORKS of JULES VERNE

EDITED BY

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JULES VERNE

"THE expander of horizons," is what a noted critic called Jules Verne. He was the prophet, the foreseer and foreteller of our great mechanical age. He belongs to-day not to France, but to the world. Widely as his works have been read in his own country, their popularity has been yet wider in America and England. Much as he has been honored at home, even higher glory has been accorded him, we are told, in far Japan. His books have been translated not only into all the usual languages, but into Hebrew, Japanese, Polish and even Arabic.

Verne was a universal teacher, both of youth and age. From him the whole world garnered knowledge without effort; for all listened with pleasure while he spun his tales. He was a supreme master of imagination,

Jules Verne

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and without imagination man is nothing; for all greatness is but a phase of imagination. It is the creative force of the world. Under Verne's guidance his readers travel in every land, examine every mode of life and labor, view all the strangest wonders of the universe.

The educators of youth have been swift to recognize the high value of the masterworks of this mighty magician. His simpler tales are used as text-books in our American schools, both in French and English. And the conscience of the moralist can here approve the eager pleasure of the reader, and bid youth continue to bask in this glorious light of wonder and adventure. There is not an evil nor uncleanly line in all the volumes. Never did anyone lay aside one of Verne's books without being a better, broader, nobler human being because of their perusal.

Surely the time is ripe when a definitive edition of the master's works should be given to American readers. Jules Verne died in 1905; and, though he left behind him in the hands of his Paris publishers an unusually large number of unissued works, the last of these has now been given to the public. Moreover we can now estimate his work calmly, unconfused by the tumultuous and very varying opinions pronounced upon it by the French critics of his own day.

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Verne's Home

Their obituary reviews of his work differed widely as to its value. On the one hand, the noted critic, Morel, in the authoritative "Nouvelle Revue" declared Verne to be the leading educator and perhaps the most read author of the new twentieth century. At the other extreme were the unsigned assaults of those who could only make a mock of what was too open and too honest for them to comprehend.

Verne was no intricate analyst, elaborating such subtleties of thought and ethics as only subtle folk can understand. He spoke for the great mass of men, giving them such tales as they could follow, upholding always such a standard of courage and virtue, simple and high, as each of us can honor for himself and be glad to set before his children.

It is not only "boy's literature" that began with Verne. One might almost say that man's literature, the story that appeals to the business man, the practical man, began then also. The great French "Encyclopédie Universelle" sums up his books by saying, "They instruct a little, entertain much, and overflow with life."

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JULES VERNE

Jules Verne was the establisher of a new species of story-telling, that which interweaves the most stupendous wonders of science with the simplest facts of human life. Our own Edgar Allen Poe had pointed the way; and Verne was ever eager to acknowledge his indebtedness to the earlier master. But Poe died; and it was Verne who went on in book after book, fascinating his readers with cleverly devised mysteries, instructing and astonishing them with the new discoveries of science, inspiring them with the splendor of man's destiny. When, as far back as 1872, his early works were "crowned" by the French Academy, its Perpetual Secretary, M. Patin, said in his official address, "The well-worn wonders of fairyland are here replaced by a new and more marvelous world, created from the most recent ideas of science."

More noteworthy still is Verne's position as the true, the astonishingly true, prophet of the discoveries and inventions that were to come. He was far more than the mere creator of that sort of scientific fairyland of which Secretary Patin spoke, and with which so many later writers, Wells, Haggard and Sir Conan Doyle, have since delighted us. He himself once keenly contrasted his own methods with those of Wells, the man he most admired among his many followers. Wells, he pointed out, looked centuries ahead and out of pure imagination

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embodied the unknowable that some day might perchance appear. "While I," said Verne, "base my inventions on a groundwork of actual fact." He illustrated this by instancing his submarine, the Nautilus. "This," said he, "when carefully considered, is a submarine mechanism about which there is nothing wholly extraordinary, nor beyond the bounds of actual scientific knowledge. It rises and sinks by perfectly well-known processes. . . . Its motive force even is no secret; the only point at which I have called in the aid of imagination is in the application of this force, and here I have purposely left a blank, for the reader to form his own conclusion, a mere technical hiatus."

So it comes that Verne's prophecies already spring to realization on every side. He foresaw and in his vivid way described not only the submarine, but also, in his "Steam-house," the automobile, in his "Robur the Conqueror," the aeroplane. Navigable balloons, huge aerial machines heavier than air, the telephone, moving pavements, stimulation by oxygen, compressed air, compressed food, all were existant among his clear-sighted visions. And to-day as we read those even bolder prophecies, accounts that excited only the laughter of his earlier critics, it is with ever-increasing wonder as to which will next come true.

His influence has been tremendous, not only

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upon story-telling, but upon life. One French commentator cries with profound admiration that Verne "wholly changed the conversation of the drawing-rooms." Another, with perhaps broader understanding, declares that he revolutionized the thought of the young men of his earlier days. "He taught us that the forces of nature, enemies to man in his ignorance, stood ready to be our servants once we had learned to master and control them."

For a writer so much read, Jules Verne has been very little talked about. His personality became submerged in his work. Moreover he was not a Parisian, not a member of the mutual admiration club which exists perforce in every artistic center, where the same little circle of able men constantly meeting, and writing one about the other, impress all their names upon the public. Verne early withdrew from the turmoil and clamor of the French capital to dwell in peace at Amiens. To ignore Paris, to withdraw deliberately from its already won caresses! Could any crime have been more heinous in Parisian eyes? It explains the rancor of at least some of the French critics in their attitude toward our author.

Verne's Tower Workroom

Known thus only through his books, yet by them known

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The Saint Michel

so universally, Verne has already become a myth. Legends have gathered around his form. In Germany writers have ponderously explained —and believed—that he was not a Frenchman at all, but a Jew, a native of Russian Poland. They gave him a birthplace, in the town of Plock, and a name, Olshewitz, of which Vergne or Verne was only a French translation, since both words mean the alder tree. In Italy about 1886 the report became widespread that he was dead, or rather that he had never lived, that he was only a name used in common by an entire syndicate of authors, who contributed their best works and best efforts to popularize the series of books whose profits they shared in common. Even in France itself men learned to say, for the sake of the antithesis, that this, the greatest of all writers of travel, had gained all his knowledge out of books and never himself had traveled beyond Amiens.

Lest to American readers also, the man, the truly lovable man, Verne, should become wholly lost behind his books, let us make brief record of him here. He was born in Nantes, the chief city of

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Brittany, on February 8, 1828. His father was a lawyer in good circumstances, and Jules' early training was also for the law. The chief pleasure of his youth lay in a battered old sailing boat, in which he and his brother Paul, taking turns at being captain, played all the stories of the sea, and explored every reach of the River Loire, even down to the mighty ocean. That sloop still echoes through his every book.

Sent to Paris to complete his studies, Jules soon drifted away from the law. He became part and parcel of all the Bohemian life of Paris, a student, artist, author, poet, clerking all day that he might live and dream and scribble all the night. A typical "son of the boulevards," they called him in those days. He became a close friend of the younger Dumas, and was introduced to his friend's yet more celebrated father, the Alexander Dumas of romance. The father guided and advised him; the son collaborated with him in his first literary success—if literary it can be called—a little one act comedy in verse, "Broken Straws," produced at the "Gymnase" in 1850. Then came librettos for comic operas, short stories for little-known story papers; and young Verne was fairly launched upon a career of authorship.

In 1857 he journeyed eighty miles to Amiens, so the story is told, to act as best man at the wed-

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ding of a friend. Before this he had long vowed himself to a single life. Art, he said, and woman were two different mistresses, and no man could truly serve both. But at Amiens he arrived late, the bridal party was already gone, and no one was left to receive the laggard but a sister of the bride, a young widow who had stayed at home to keep from casting her gloom upon the festivity. Within the hour both Jules and the young widow, Mme. de Vianne, had abandoned all their former views, and recognized each other as life companions. This sounds like another legend; but it seems well vouched for. Verne married Mme. de Vianne within the year.

In 1860 or shortly after, Verne met the one other person who was most to influence his life, the great Parisian publisher, Hetzel, who had issued the works of Hugo, of Georges Sand, and of DeMusset. Hetzel, who had been in exile in Brussels, returned to Paris in 1860: and our author soon began writing for him. The two became warm friends.

Verne's first full length novel or story was issued by Hetzel in 1863. This epoch-making book was "Five Weeks in a Balloon." In it the young author attained for the first time his characteristic vein of explorations into unknown regions, intermingling the new science with adventures and heroism as old as man.

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The book was a tremendous success. The whole world read, and was delighted. Hetzel started a "Magazine of Education and Recreation," which was chiefly supported by Verne's writings. Author and publisher made a twenty year contract, under which Verne was to produce two books a year; and being thus assured of financial independence, Verne in 1870 withdrew with his wife to her native Amiens. There he lived in quietude for over thirty-five years, until his death.

Verne's Tombstone

The legend that he never quitted Amiens at all is, however, false. Twice at least he journeyed to the British Isles, and once, though before his retirement to Amiens, to America and once to Scandinavia. Moreover his youthful love for sailing clung to him. In a little ten ton boat, he cruised much in summer along the French coast; and later in life he owned a handsome hundred foot steam yacht, the "Saint Michel," in which he visited Mediterranean Africa, Malta and much of the European coast.

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Chiefly, however, Verne's later life was devoted to his books, and to the civic world of Amiens. He was a member of the town council, an active and earnest member, who won the devoted regard of his fellow townsmen.

He and the grand cathedral of Amiens were the city's twin celebrities, their pictures standing side by side in shop-windows and decorating postal cards. The Verne homestead was on one of the principal boulevards, a handsome house with, at its rear, a tower, the topmost room of which formed a secluded den where the writer worked.

In this tower room, he continued steadily producing his stories. As far back as 1872 he had been a candidate for the celebrated French Academy, with strong chances of election. But the Academy, while it crowned his individual books, refused membership to their author, though after that first candidacy he in the course of his later life watched the entire membership of the Academy pass and be renewed twice over. His friends, especially his Amiens townfolk, declared that his exclusion was due to Parisian jealousy, and that the Academy lost far more honor than the author by ignoring him. "Paris," said one of them, "had nothing worthy of this great man. He sought a place for work; Paris offers its great men only lounging places."

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Yet, in no spirit of unfairness, we must admit that Jules Verne's claim upon the Academy rather decreased with added years. Most of his later books by no means equal his earlier ones. A man over seventy may well be pardoned if he no longer writes with the fresh fancy and confident vigor of thirty-five. To present all Verne's later work to American readers would be fair neither to the fame of the author nor to the pocket of the public. Therefore a labor of selection has been necessary. All the works that have made Jules Verne beloved, all that present his imaginary inventions, his prophecies of the future, every work that honest critics have thought worth preserving, is included in this edition. It presents not only those books crowned by the French Academy, but all those crowned by the verdict of that final judge, that best of judges when long years run full, that judge to whom all our work must be submitted in the end, the general public.

To them this work is dedicated.

Charles F. Horne

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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME ONE

IN this volume are included Verne's first masterpiece, "Five Weeks in a Balloon," and also all such of his earlier stories as he himself thought worth preserving. These he gathered in later years, and had some of them reissued by his Paris publishers.

"A Drama in the Air," was, as Verne himself tells us, his first published story. It appeared soon after 1850 in a little-known local magazine called the "Musée des Familles." The tale, though somewhat amateurish, is very characteristic of the master's later style. In it we can see, as it were, the germ of all that was to follow, the interest in the new advances of science, the dramatic story, the carefully collected knowledge of the past, the infusion of instruction amid the excitement of the tale.

Similarly we find "A Winter in the Ice" to be a not unworthy predecessor of "The Adventures of Captain Hatteras" and all the author's other great books of adventure in the frozen world. Here, at the first attempt, a vigorous and impressive story introduces us to the northland, thoroughly understood, accurately described, vividly appreciated and pictured forth in its terror and its mystery.

"The Pearl of Lima" opens the way to all those stories of later novelists wherein some ancient kingly race, some forgotten civilization of Africa or America, reasserts itself in the person of some spectacular descendant, tragically matching its obscure and half-demoniac powers against the might of the modern world. "The Mutineers" inaugurates our author's favorite geographical device. It describes a remarkable and little-known country by having the characters of the story travel over it on some anxious errand, tracing their progress step by step.

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Thus, of these five early tales, "The Watch's Soul" is the only one differing sharply from Verne's later work. It is allegorical, supernatural, depending not upon the scientific marvels of the material world, but upon the direct interposition of supernal powers.

"Five Weeks in a Balloon," the last and by far the most important story in this volume, is Verne's first complete and accepted masterpiece. This book, published in 1863 without preliminary display, made the author instantly a central figure in the literary world. Like Byron he awoke one morning and found himself famous.

Verne told his friends that before writing this book, he had no knowledge whatever of practical ballooning. Indeed the balloon was, to his view, quite a secondary part of the tale. Always an omnivorous reader of works of travel, he conceived the idea of writing into one book the descriptions of parts of Africa gathered from the accounts of the great explorers. These men he regarded as heroes of the highest type, worthy of the most distinguished honor; and he sought to honor them.

As he worked over the tale, the possibilities of scientific and even more of dramatic interest to be gained from the balloon, appealed to him more and more. To his friends he confided that he had conceived an idea or rather a combination of ideas by the publication of which he hoped he might achieve real fame.

He was right. "Five Weeks in a Balloon" was unique in the literature of the day. Its success was as immediate and tremendous as it was deserved. The book is painstakingly accurate in its following of the descriptions of the explorers, a truly valuable piece of geographical work. It is almost inspired in its deductions as to the probable character of the unknown land beyond their travels, its descriptions of that mysterious heart of Africa which even yet is largely unexplored. In the handling of the fortunes of the balloon and the balloonists, the elements of drama and suspense, the book is an acknowledged masterpiece.

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A Drama in the Air

IN the month of September, 185—, I arrived at Frankfort-on-the-Main. My passage through the principal German cities had been brilliantly marked by balloon ascents; but as yet no German had accompanied me in my car, and the fine experiments made at Paris by MM. Greene, Eugene Godard, and Poitevin had not tempted the grave Teutons to essay aerial voyages.

But scarcely had the news of my approaching ascent spread through Frankfort, than three of the principal citizens begged the favor of being allowed to ascend with me. Two days afterwards we were to start from the Place de la Comédie. I began at once to get my balloon ready. It was of silk, prepared with gutta percha; and its volume, which was three thousand cubic yards, enabled it to ascend to the loftiest heights.

The day of the ascent was that of the great September fair, which attracts so many people to Frankfort. Lighting gas, of perfect quality and great lifting power, had been furnished me, and about eleven o'clock the balloon was filled; but only three-quarters filled,—an indispensable precaution, for, as one rises, the atmosphere diminishes in density, and the fluid enclosed within the balloon, acquiring more elasticity, might burst its sides. My calculations told me exactly the quantity of gas necessary to carry up my companions and myself.

We were to start at noon. The impatient crowd which pressed around the enclosed square, overflowing into the contiguous streets, and covering the houses from the ground-floor to the slated gables, presented a striking scene.

I carried three hundred pounds of ballast in bags; the car, quite round, four feet in diameter, was comfortably arranged; the hempen cords which supported it stretched symmetrically over the upper hemisphere of the balloon; the

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compass was in place, the barometer suspended in the circle which united the supporting cords, and the anchor put in order. All was now ready for the ascent.

Among those who pressed around the enclosure, I remarked a young man with a pale face and agitated features. The sight of him impressed me. He was an eager spectator of my ascents, whom I had already met in several German cities. With an uneasy air, he closely watched the curious machine, as it lay motionless a few feet above the ground; and he remained silent among those about him.

Twelve o'clock came. The moment had arrived, but my traveling companions did not appear.

I sent to their houses, and learnt that one had left for Hamburg, another for Vienna, and the third for London. Their courage had failed them at undertaking one of those excursions which, thanks to the improvement in aeronautics are free from all danger. As they formed, in some sort, a part of the programme of the day, the fear had seized them that they might be forced to execute it faithfully, and they had fled far from the scene at the instant when the balloon was being filled. Their heroism was evidently in inverse ratio to their speed—in decamping.

The multitude, half deceived, showed not a little ill humor. I did not hesitate to ascend alone. In order to re-establish the equilibrium between the specific gravity of the balloon and the weight which had thus proved wanting, I replaced my companions by more sacks of sand, and got into the car. The twelve men who held the balloon by twelve cords, let these slip a little between their fingers, and the balloon rose several feet higher. There was not a breath of wind, and the atmosphere was so laden that it seemed to forbid the ascent.

"Is everything ready?" I cried.

The men put themselves in readiness. A last glance told me that I might go. "Attention!"

There was a movement in the crowd, which seemed to be invading the enclosure.

"Let go!"

The balloon rose slowly, but I experienced a shock which threw me to the bottom of the car.

When I got up, I found myself face to face with an unexpected fellow-voyager,—the pale young man.

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"Monsieur, I salute you," said he, with utmost coolness.

"By what right——"

"Am I here? By the right which the impossibility of your getting rid of me confers."

I was amazed! His calmness put me out of countenance, and I had nothing to reply. I looked at the intruder but he took no notice of my astonishment.

"Does my weight disarrange your equilibrium, monsieur?" he asked. "You will permit me—" and without waiting consent, he picked up two bags and threw them into space.

"Monsieur," said I, taking the only course now possible, "you have come; very well, you will remain; but to me alone belongs the management of the balloon."

"Monsieur," said he, "your urbanity is French all over: it comes from my own country. I morally press the hand you refuse me. Make all precautions, and act as seems best to you. I will wait till you have done——"

"For what?"

"To talk with you."

The barometer had fallen to twenty-six inches. We were nearly six hundred yards above the city; but nothing betrayed the horizontal displacement of the balloon, for the mass of air in which it is enclosed goes forward with it. A sort of confused glow enveloped the objects spread out under us, and fortunately obscured their outline.

I examined my companion afresh. He was a man of thirty years, simply clad. The sharpness of his features betrayed an indomitable energy, and he seemed very muscular. Indifferent to the astonishment he created, he remained motionless, trying in the meantime to distinguish the objects below us.

"Miserable mist!" said he, after a few moments.

I did not reply.

"You owe me a grudge?" he went on. "Bah! I could not pay for my journey, and it was necessary to take you by surprise."

"Nobody asks you to descend, monsieur!"

"Eh, do you not know, then, that the same thing happened to the Counts of Laurencin and Dampierre, when they ascended at Lyons, on the 15th of January, 1784? A young merchant, named Fontaine, scaled the gallery, at the

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risk of capsizing the machine. He accomplished the journey, and nobody died of it!"

"Once on the ground, we will have an explanation," replied I, piqued at the light tone in which he spoke.

"Bah! Do not let us think of our return."

"Do you think, then, I shall not hasten to descend?"

"Descend!" said he, in surprise. "Descend? Let us begin by first ascending."

And before I could prevent it, two more bags had been thrown out of the car, without even having been emptied.

"Monsieur!" cried I, in a rage.

"I know your ability," replied the unknown quietly, "and your fine ascents are famous. But if Experience is the sister of Practice, she is also a cousin of Theory, and I have studied the aerial art long. It has got into my head!" he added sadly, falling into a silent reverie.

The balloon, having risen some distance farther, now become stationary. The unknown consulted the barometer and said, "Here we are, at eight hundred yards. Men are like insects. See! I think we should always contemplate them from this height, to judge correctly of their proportions. The Place de la Comédie is transformed into an immense ant-hill. Observe the crowd which is gathered on the quays; and the mountains also get smaller and smaller. We are over the Cathedral. The Main is only a line, cutting the city in two, and the bridge seems a thread thrown between the two banks of the river."

The atmosphere became somewhat chilly.

"There is nothing I would not do for you, my host," said the unknown. "If you are cold, I will take off my coat and lend it to you."

"Thanks," said I dryly.

"Bah! Necessity makes law. Give me your hand. I am your fellow-countryman; you will learn something in my company, and my conversation will indemnify you for the trouble I have given you."

I sat down, without replying, at the opposite extremity of the car. The young man drew a voluminous manuscript from his coat. It was an essay on ballooning.

"I possess," said he, "the most curious collection of engravings and caricatures extant concerning aerial manias. How people admired and scoffed at the same time at this

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precious discovery! We are happily no longer in the age in which Montgolfier tried to make artificial clouds with steam, or a gas having electrical properties, produced by the combustion of moist straw and chopped-up-wool."

"Do you wish to depreciate the talent of the inventors?" I asked, for I had resolved to enter into the adventure. "Was it not good to have proved by experience the possibility of rising in the air?"

"Ah, monsieur, who denies the glory of the first aerial navigators? It required immense courage to rise by means of those frail envelopes which only contained heated air. But I ask you, has the aerial science made great progress since Blanchard's ascensions, that is, since nearly a century ago? Look here, monsieur."

The unknown took an engraving from his portfolio.

"Here," said he, "is the first aerial voyage undertaken by Pilâtre des Rosiers and the Marquis d'Arlandes, four months after the discovery of balloons. Louis XVI. refused to consent to the venture, and two men who were condemned to death were the first to attempt the aerial ascent. Pilâtre des Rosiers became indignant at this injustice, and, by means of intrigues, obtained permission to make the experiment. The car, which renders the management easy, had not then been invented, and a circular gallery was placed around the lower and contracted part of the Montgolfier balloon. The two aeronauts must then remain motionless at each extremity of this gallery, for the moist straw which filled it forbade them all motion. A chafing-dish with fire was suspended below the orifice of the balloon; when the aeronauts wished to rise, they threw straw upon this brazier, at the risk of setting fire to the balloon, and the air, more heated, gave it fresh ascending power. The two bold travelers rose, on the 21st of November, 1783, from the Muette Gardens, which the dauphin had put at their disposal. The balloon went up majestically, passed over the Isle of Swans, crossed the Seine at the Conference barrier, and, drifting between the dome of the Invalids and the Military School, approached the Church of Saint Sulpice. Then the aeronauts added to the fire, crossed the Boulevard, and descended beyond the Enfer barrier. As it touched the soil, the balloon collapsed, and for a few moments buried Pilâtre des Rosiers under its folds."

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"Unlucky augury," I said, interested in the story, which affected me nearly.

"An augury of the catastrophe which was later to cost this unfortunate man his life," replied the unknown sadly. "Have you never experienced anything like it?"

"Never."

"Bah! Misfortunes sometimes occur unforeshadowed!" added my companion. He then remained silent.

We were drifting southward, and Frankfort had already passed from beneath us.

"Perhaps we shall have a storm," said the young man.

"We shall descend before that," I replied.

"Better to ascend. We shall escape it more surely." And two more bags of sand were hurled into space.

The balloon rose rapidly, and stopped at twelve hundred yards. I became colder; and yet the sun's rays, falling upon the surface, expanded the gas within, and gave it a greater ascending force.

"Fear nothing," said the unknown. "We have still three thousand five hundred fathoms of breathing air. Besides, do not trouble yourself about what I do."

I would have risen, but a vigorous hand held me to my seat. "Your name?" I asked.

"My name? What matters it to you?"

"I demand your name!"

"My name is Erostratus or Empedocles, whichever you choose!"

This reply was far from reassuring. The unknown, besides, talked with such strange coolness that I anxiously asked myself whom I had to deal with.

"Monsieur," he continued, "nothing original has been imagined since the physicist Charles. Four months after the discovery of balloons, this man had invented the valve which permits the gas to escape when the balloon is too full, or when you wish to descend; the car, which aids the management of the machine; the netting, which holds the envelope of the balloon, and divides the weight over its whole surface; the ballast, which enables you to ascend, and to choose the place of your landing; the india-rubber coating, which renders the tissue impermeable; the barometer, which shows the height attained. Lastly, Charles used hydrogen, which, fourteen times lighter than air, permits you to pene-

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trate to the highest atmospheric regions, and does not expose you to the dangers of a combustion in the air. On the 1st of December, 1783, three hundred thousand spectators were crowded around the Tuilleries. Charles rose, and the soldiers presented arms to him. He traveled nine leagues in the air, conducting his balloon with an ability not surpassed by modern aeronauts. The king awarded him a pension of two thousand livres; for then they encouraged new inventions."

The unknown now seemed to be under the influence of considerable agitation.

"See, there is Darmstadt," said he, leaning over the car. "Do you perceive the château? Not very distinctly, eh? What would you have? The heat of the storm makes the outline of objects waver, and you must have a skilled eye to recognize localities."

"Are you certain it is Darmstadt?" I asked

"I am sure of it. We are now six leagues from Frankfort."

"Then we must descend."

"Descend! You would not go down on the steeples," said the unknown, with a chuckle.

"No, but in the surburbs of the city."

"Well, let us avoid the steeples!"

So speaking, my companion seized some bags of ballast. I hastened to prevent him; but he overthrew me with one hand, and the unballasted balloon ascended to two thousand yards.

"Rest easy," said he, "and do not forget that Brioschi, Biot, Gay-Lussac, Bixio, and Barral ascended to still greater heights to make their scientific experiments."

"Monsieur, we must descend," I resumed, trying to persuade him by gentleness. "The storm is gathering around us. It would be more prudent——"

"Bah! We will mount higher than the storm, and then we shall no longer fear it!" cried my companion. "What is nobler than to overlook the clouds which oppress the earth? Is it not an honor thus to navigate on aerial billows? The greatest men have traveled as we are doing. The Marchioness and Countees de Montalembert, the Countess of Podenas, Mademoiselle la Garde, the Marquis de Montalembert, rose from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine for these

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unknown regions, and the Duke de Chartres exhibited much skill and presence of mind in his ascent on the 15th of July, 174. At Lyons, the Counts of Laurencin and Dampierre; at Nantes, M. de Luynes; at Bordeaux, D'Arbelet des Granges; in Italy, the Chevalier Andreani; in our own time, the Duke of Brunswick,—have all left traces of their glory in the air. To equal these great personages, we must penetrate still higher than they into the celestial depths! To approach the infinite is to comprehend it!"

The rarefaction of the air was fast expanding the hydrogen in the balloon, and I saw its lower part, purposely left empty, swell out, so that it was absolutely necessary to open the valve; but my companion did not seem to intend that I should manage the balloon as I wished. I then resolved to pull the valve-cord secretly, as he was excitedly talking; for I feared to guess with whom I had to deal. It would have been too horrible! It was nearly a quarter before one. We had been gone forty minutes from Frankfort; heavy clouds were coming against the wind from the south, and seemed about to burst upon us.

"Have you lost all hope of succeeding in your project?" I asked with anxious interest.

"All hope!" exclaimed the unknown in a low voice. "Wounded by slights and caricatures, these asses' kicks have finished me! It is the eternal punishment reserved for innovators! Look at these caricatures of all periods, of which my portfolio is full."

While my companion was fumbling with his papers, I had seized the valve-cord without his perceiving it. I feared, however, that he might hear the hissing noise, like a water-course, which the gas makes in escaping.

"How many jokes were made about the Abbé Miolan! said he. "He was to go up with Janninet and Bredin. During the filling their ballon caught fire, and the ignorant populace tore it in pieces! Then this caricature of 'curious animals' appeared, giving each of them a punning nickname."

I pulled the valve-cord, and the barometer began to ascend. It was time. Some far-off rumblings were heard in the south.

"Here is another engraving," resumed the unknown, not suspecting what I was doing. "It is an immense balloon

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carrying a ship, strong castles, houses, and so on. The caricaturists did not suspect that their follies would one day become truths. It is complete, this large vessel. On the left is its helm, with the pilot's box; at the prow are pleasure-houses, an immense organ, and a cannon to call the attention of the inhabitants of the earth or the moon; above the poop there are the observatory and the balloon long-boat; in the equatorial circle, the army barrack; on the left, the funnel; then the upper galleries for promenading, sails, pinions; below, the cafés and general storehouse. Observe this pompous announcement: 'Invented for the happiness of the human race, this globe will depart at once for the ports of the Levant, and on its return the programme of its voyages to the two poles and the extreme west will be announced. No one need furnish himself with anything; everything is foreseen, and all will prosper. Thus pleasure will be the soul of the aerial company.' All this provoked laughter; but before long, if I am not cut off, they will see it all realized."

We were visibly descending. He did not perceive it!

"This kind of 'game at balloons,'" he resumed, spreading out before me some of the engravings of his valuable collection, "this game contains the entire history of the aerostatic art. It is used by elevated minds, and displayed with dice and counters, with whatever stakes you like, to be paid or received according to where the player arrives."

"Why," said I, "you seem to have studied the science of aerostation profoundly."

"Yes, monsieur, yes! From Phaeton, Icarus, Architas, I have searched for, examined, learnt everything. I could render immense services to the world in this art, if God granted me life. But that will not be!"

"Why?"

"Because my name is Empedocles, or Erostratus."

Meanwhile, the balloon was happily approaching the earth; but when one is falling, the danger is as great at a hundred feet as at five thousand.

"Do you recall the battle of Fleurus?" resumed my companion, whose face became more and more animated. "It was at that battle that Contello, by order of the Government, organized a company of ballonists. At the siege of Manbenge General Jourdan derived so much service from this

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new method of observation that Contello ascended twice a day with the general himself. The communications between the aeronaut and his agents who held the balloon were made by means of small white, red, and yellow flags. Often the gun and cannon shot were directed upon the balloon when he ascended, but without result. Where General Jourdan was perparing to invest Charleroi, Contello went in the vicinity, ascended from the plain of Jumet, and continued his observations for seven or eight hours with General Morlot, and this no doubt aided in giving us the victory of Fleurus. General Jourdan publicly acknowledged the help which the aeronautical observations had afforded him. Well, despite the services rendered on that occasion and during the Belgian campaign, the year which had seen the beginning of the military career of balloons saw also its end. The school of Meudon, founded by the Government, was closed by Buonaparte on his return from Egypt. And now, what can you expect from the new-born infant? as Franklin said. The infant was born alive; it should not be stifled!"

The unknown bowed his head in his hands for some moments; then rousing himself, he said, "Despite my prohibition, monsieur, you have opened the valve."

I dropped the cord.

"Happily," he resumed, "we have still three hundred pounds of ballast."

"What is your purpose?" said I.

"Have you ever crossed the seas?" he asked.

I turned pale.

"It is unfortunate," he went on, "that we are being driven towards the Adriatic. That is only a stream; but higher up we may find other currents."

And, without taking any notice of me, he threw over several bags of sand; then, in a menacing voice, he said, "I let you open the valve because the expanding gas threatened to burst the balloon; but do not do it again!"

Then he went on, "You remember the voyage of Blanchard and Jeffries from Dover to Calais? It was magnificent! On the 7th of January, 1785, there being a north-west wind, their balloon was inflated with gas on the Dover coast. A mistake of equilibrium, just as they were ascending, forced them to throw out their ballast so that they might not go down again, and they only kept thirty pounds. It was too

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little; for, as the wind did not freshen, they only advanced very slowly towards the French coast. Besides, the permeability of the tissue served to reduce the inflation little by little, and in an hour and a half the aeronauts perceived that they were descending.

"'What shall we do?' said Jeffries.

"'We are only one quarter of the way over,' replied Blanchard, 'and very low down. On rising, we shall perhaps meet more favorable winds.'

"'Let us throw out the rest of the sand.'

"The balloon acquired some ascending force, but it soon began to descend again. Towards the middle of the transit the aeronauts threw over their books and tools. A quarter of an hour after, Blanchard said to Jeffries, 'The barometer?'

"'It is going up! We are lost, and yet there is the French coast.'

"A loud noise was heard.

"'Has the balloon burst?' asked Jeffries.

"'No. The loss of the gas has reduced the inflation of the lower part of the balloon. But we are still descending. We are lost! Out with everything useless!'

"Provisions, oars, and rudder were thrown into the sea. The aeronauts were only one hundred yards high.

"'We are going up again," said the doctor.

"'No. It is the spurt caused by the diminution of the weight, and not a ship in sight, not a bark on the horizon! To the sea with our clothing!'

"The unfortunates stripped themselves, but the balloon continued to descend.

"'Blanchard,' said Jeffries, 'you should have made this voyage alone; you consented to take me; I will sacrifice myself! I shall drop into the water, and the balloon, relieved of my weight, will mount again.'

"'No, no! It is frightful!'

"The balloon became less and less inflated, and as it doubled up its concavity pressed the gas against the sides, and hastened its downward course.

"'Adieu,' said the doctor 'God preserve you!'

"He was about to throw himself over, when Blanchard held him back.

"'There is one more chance,' said he. 'We can cut the

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cords which hold the car, and cling to the net! Perhaps the balloon will rise. Let us hold ourselves ready. But— the barometer is going down! The wind is freshening! We are saved!'

"The aeronauts perceived Calais. Their joy was delirious. A few moments more, and they had fallen in the forest of Guines. I do not doubt," added the unknown, "that, under similar circumstances, you would have followed Doctor Jeffries' example!"

The clouds rolled in glittering masses beneath us. The balloon threw large shadows on them, and was surrounded as by an aureola. The thunder rumbled below the car. All this was terrifying. "Let us descend!" I cried.

"Descend, when the sun is up there, waiting for us? Out with more bags!"

And more than fifty pounds of ballast were cast over.

At a height of three thousand five hundred yards we remained stationary. The unknown talked unceasingly. I was in a state of complete prostration, while he seemed to be in his element. "With a good wind, we shall go far," he cried. "In the Antilles there are currents of air which have a speed of a hundred leagues an hour. When Napoleon was crowned, Garnerin sent up a balloon with colored lamps, at eleven o'clock at night. The wind was blowing north-north-west. The next morning, at daybreak, the inhabitants of Rome greeted its passage over the dome of St Peter's. We shall go farther and higher!"

I scarcely heard him. Everything whirled around me. An opening appeared in the clouds.

"See that city," said the unknown. "It is Spires!"

I leaned over the car and perceived a small blackish mass. It was Spires. The Rhine, which is so large, seemed an unrolled ribbon. The sky was a deep blue over our heads. The birds had long abandoned us, for in that rarefied air they could not have flown. We were alone in space, and I in the presence of this unknown!

"It is useless for you to know whither I am leading you," he said, as he threw the compass among the clouds. "Ah! a fall is a grand thing! You know that but few victims of ballooning are to be reckoned, from Pilâtre des Rosiers to Lieutenant Gale, and that the accidents have always been the result of imprudence. Pilâtre des Rosiers set out with

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Romain of Boulogne, on the 13th of June, 1785. To his gas balloon he had affixed a Montgolfier apparatus of hot air, so as to dispense, no doubt, with the necessity of losing gas or throwing out ballast. It was putting a torch under a powder-barrel. When they had ascended four hundred yards, and were taken by opposing winds, they were driven over the open sea. Pilâtre, in order to descend, essayed to open the valve, but the valve-cord became entangled in the balloon, and tore it so badly that it became empty in an instant. It fell upon the Montgolfier apparatus, overturned it, and dragged down the unfortunates, who were soon shattered to pieces! It is frightful, is it not?"

I could only reply, "For pity's sake let us descend!"

The clouds gathered around us on every side, and dreadful detonations, which reverberated in the cavity of the balloon, took place beneath us.

"You provoke me," cried the unknown, "and you shall no longer know whether we are rising or falling!"

The barometer went the way of the compass, accompanied by several more bags of sand. We must have been 5000 yards high. Some icicles had already attached themselves to the sides of the car, and a kind of fine snow seemed to penetrate to my very bones. Meanwhile a frightful tempest was raging under us, but we were above it.

"Do not be afraid," said the unknown. "It is only the imprudent who are lost. Olivari, who perished at Orleans, rose in a paper 'Montgolfier;' his car, suspended below the chafing-dish, and ballasted with combustible materials, caught fire; Olivari fell, and was killed! Mosment rose, at Lille, on a light tray; an oscillation disturbed his equilibrium; Mosment fell, and was killed! Bittorf, at Manuheim, saw his balloon catch fire in the air; and he, too, fell, and was killed! Harris rose in a badly constructed balloon, the valve of which was too large and would not shut; Harris fell, and was killed! Sadler, deprived of ballast by his long sojourn in the air, was dragged over the town of Boston and dashed against the chimneys; Sadler fell, and was killed! Cokling descended with a convex parachute which he pretended to have perfected; Cokling fell, and was killed! Well, I love them, these victims of their own imprudence, and I shall die as they did. Higher! still higher!"

All the phantoms of this necrology passed before my

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eyes. The rarefaction of the air and the sun's rays added to the expansion of the gas, and the balloon continued to mount. I tried to open the valve, but the unknown cut the cord several feet above my head. I was lost.

"Did you see Madame Blanchard fall?" said he. "I saw her; yes, I! I was at Tivoli on the 6th of July, 1819. Madame Blanchard rose in a small-sized balloon, to avoid the expense of filling, and she was forced to inflate it entirely. The gas leaked out below, and left a regular train of hydrogen in its path. She carried with her a sort of pyrotechnic aureola, suspended below her car by a wire, which she was to set off in the air. This she had done many times before. On this day she also carried up a small parachute ballasted by a firework contrivance, that would go off in a shower of silver. She was to start this contrivance after having lighted it with a port-fire made on purpose. She set out; the night was gloomy. At the moment of lighting her fireworks she was so imprudent as to pass the taper under the column of hydrogen which was leaking from the balloon. My eyes were fixed upon her. Suddenly an unexpected gleam lit up the darkness. I thought she was preparing a surprise. The light flashed out, suddenly disappeared and reappeared, and gave the summit of the balloon the shape of an immense jet of ignited gas. This sinister glow shed itself over the Boulevard and the whole Montmarrte quarter. Then I saw the unhappy woman rise, try twice to close the appendage of the balloon, so as to put out the fire, then sit down in her car and try to guide her descent; for she did not fall. The combustion of the gas lasted for several minutes. The balloon, becoming gradually less, continued to descend, but it was not a fall. The wind blew from the north-west and drove it towards Paris. There were then some large gardens just by the house No. 16, Rue de Provence. Madame Blanchard essayed to fall there without danger; but the ballon and the car struck on the roof of the house with a light shock. 'Save me!' cried the wretched woman. I got into the street at this moment. The car slid along the roof, and encountered an iron cramp. Madame Blanchard was thrown out of her car and precipitated upon the pavement She was killed!"

These stories froze me with horror. The unknown was

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standing with bare head, disheveled hair, haggard eyes! There was no longer any illusion possible. I recognized the horrible truth. I was in the presence of a madman!

He threw out the rest of the ballast, and we must have now reached a height of at least nine thousand yards. Blood spurted from my nose and mouth!

"Who are nobler than the martyrs of science?" cried the lunatic. "They are canonized by posterity."

But I no longer heard him. He bent down to my ear and muttered, "And have you forgotten Zambecarri's catastrophe? Listen. On the 7th of October, 1804, the clouds seemed to lift a little. On the preceding days, the wind and rain had not ceased; but the announced ascension of Zambecarri could not be postponed. His enemies were already bantering him. It was necessary to ascend to save the science and himself from becoming a public jest. It was at Boulogne. No one helped him to inflate his balloon. He rose at midnight, accompanied by Andreoli and Grossetti. The balloon mounted slowly, for it had been perforated by the rain, and the gas was leaking out. The three intrepid aeronauts could only observe the state of the barometer by aid of a dark lantern. Zambecarri had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours. Grossetti was also fasting.

"'My friends,' said Zambecarri, 'I am overcome by cold, and exhausted. I am dying.'

"He fell inanimate in the gallery. It was the same with Grossetti. Andreoli alone remained conscious. After long efforts, he succeeded in reviving Zambecarri.

"'What news? Whither are we going? How is the wind? What time is it?'

"'It is two o'clock.'

"'Where is the compass?'

"'Upset!'

"'Great God! The lantern has gone out!'

"'It cannot burn in this rarefied air," said Zambecarri.

"The moon had not risen and the atmosphere was plunged in murky darkness. "'I am cold, Andreoli. What shall I do?'

"They slowly descended through a layer of whitish clouds. 'Sh!' said Andreoli. 'Do you hear?'

"'What?' asked Zambecarri.

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"'A strange noise.'

"'You are mistaken. Consider these travelers, in the middle of the night, listening to that unaccountable noise! Are they going to knock against a tower? Are they about to be precipitated on the roofs? 'Do you hear? One would say it was the sea.'

"'Impossible!'

"'It is the groaning of the waves!'

"'It is true.'

"'Light! light!' After five fruitless attempts, Andreoli succeeded in obtaining light. It was three o'clock.

"The voice of violent waves was heard. They were almost touching the surface of the sea! 'We are lost!' cried Zambecarri, seizing a bag of sand.

"'Help!' cried Andreoli.

"The car touched the water, and the waves came up to their breasts. 'Throw out the instruments, clothes!'

"The aeronauts completely stripped themselves. The balloon, relieved, rose with frightful rapidity. Zambecarri was taken with vomiting. Grossetti bled profusely. The unfortunate men could not speak, so short was their breathing. They were taken with cold, and they were soon crusted over with ice. The moon looked as red as blood.

"After traversing the high regions for a half-hour, the balloon again fell into the sea. It was four in the morning. They were half submerged in the water, and the balloon dragged them along, as if under sail, for several hours.

"At daybreak they found themselves opposite Pesaro, four miles from the coast. They were about to reach it, when a gale blew them back into the open sea. They were lost! The frightened boats fled at their approach Happily, a more intelligent boatman accosted them, hoisted them on board, and they landed at Ferrada.

"A frightful journey, was it not? But Zambecarri was a brave and energetic man. Scarcely recovered from his sufferings, he resumed his ascensions. During one of them he struck against a tree; his spirit-lamp was broken on his clothes; he was enveloped in fire, his balloon began to catch the flames, and he came down half consumed.

"At last, on the 21st of September, 1812, he made another ascension at Boulogne. The balloon clung to a tree, and his lamp again set it on fire. Zambecarri fell, and was

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killed! And in presence of these facts, we would still hesitate! No. The higher we go, the more glorious will be our death!"

The balloon being now entirely relieved of ballast and of all it contained, we were carried to an enormous height. It vibrated in the atmosphere. The least noise resounded in the vaults of heaven. Our globe, the only object which caught my view in immensity, seemed ready to be annihilated, and above us the depths of the starry skies were lost in thick darkness.

I saw my companion rise up before me.

"The hour is come!" he said. "We must die. We are rejected of men. They despise us. We will not endure it. Let us crush them!"

"Mercy!" I cried.

"Let us cut these cords! Let this car be abandoned in space. The attractive force will change its direction, and we shall approach the sun!"

Despair galvanized me. I threw myself upon the madman, we struggled together, and a terrible conflict took place. But I was thrown down, and while he held me under his knee, the madman was cutting the cords of the car.

"One!" he cried.

"My God!"

"Two! Three!"

I made a superhuman effort, rose up, and violently repulsed the madman.

"Four!" The car fell, but I instinctively clung to the cords and hoisted myself into the meshes of the netting.

The madman disappeared in space!

The balloon rose to an immeasurable height. A horrible cracking was heard. The gas, too much dilated, had burst the balloon. I shut my eyes——

Some instants after, a damp warmth revived me. I was in the midst of clouds on fire. The balloon turned over with dizzy velocity. Taken by the wind, it made a hundred leagues an hour in a horizontal course, the lightning flashing around it.

Meanwhile my fall was not a very rapid one. When I opened my eyes, I saw the country. I was two miles from the sea, and the tempest was driving me violently towards it, when an abrupt shock forced me to loosen my hold. My

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hands opened, a cord slipped swiftly between my fingers, and I found myself on the solid earth!

It was the cord of the anchor, which, sweeping along the surface of the ground, was caught in a crevice; and my balloon, unballasted for the last time, careered off to lose itself beyond the sea.

When I came to myself, I was in bed in a peasant's cottage, at Harderwick, a village of La Gueldre, fifteen leagues from Amsterdam, on the shores of the Zuyder-Zee.

A miracle had saved my life, but my voyage had been a series of imprudences, committed by a lunatic, and I had not been able to prevent them.

May this terrible narrative, though instructing those who read it, not discourage the explorers of the air.

THE END

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The Watch's Soul

OR

Master Zacharius

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The Watch's Soul

CHAPTER I

A WINTER'S NIGHT

THE city of Geneva is situated at the western extremity of the lake to which it gives—or owes—its name. The Rhone, which crosses the city on emerging from the lake, divides it into two distinct quarters, and is itself divided, in the center of the city, by an island rising between its two banks. This topographical situation is often to be observed in the great centers of commerce or industry. Doubtless the earliest inhabitants were seduced by the facilities of transportation afforded by the rapid arms of the rivers,—"those roads which advance of themselves," as Pascal says. In the case of the Rhone, they are roads which run. At the period when new and regular buildings had not as yet been erected on this island, anchored like a Dutch galiot in the midst of the river, the wonderful mass of houses huddled the one against the other offered to the eye a confusion full of charms. The small extent of the island had forced some of these buildings to perch upon piles, fastened pell-mell in the strong currents of the Rhone. These big timbers, blackened by time and worn by the waters, looked like the claws of an immense crab, and produced a fantastic effect. Some yellowed nets, real spiders' webs stretched amid these venerable substructures, shivered and trembled in the shade as if they had been the foliage of these old oaks, and the river, engulfing itself in the midst of this forest of piles, foamed with melancholy groans.

One of the habitations on the island struck the observer by its strange appearance of extreme age. It was the residence of the old clockmaker, Master Zacharius, his daughter Gerande, Aubert Thun, his apprentice, and his old servant, Scholastique.

What an original personage was this Zacharius! His age seemed incalculable. The oldest inhabitants of Geneva could not have told how long his lean head had wavered on his shoulders, nor the first day on which he had been seen

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walking along the streets of the town, his long white locks floating waywardly in the wind. This man did not live. He oscillated after the manner of the pendulums of his clocks. His features, dry and cadaverous, affected somber tints. Like the pictures of Leonardo da Vinci, he had put black in the foreground.

Gerande occupied the best room in the old house; whence, through a narrow window, her gaze rested sadly upon the snowy summits of the Jura. But the bedroom and shop of the old man were in a sort of cellar, situated on a level with the river; the flooring rested on the piles themselves. From an immemorial period Master Zacharius had not been known to emerge thence, except at meal-time, and when he went forth to regulate the different clocks of the city. He passed the rest of the time at a bench covered with numerous clockmaking instruments, which, for the most part, he had himself invented.

For he was a man of talent. His works were very popular throughout France and Germany. The most industrious workmen in Geneva freely admitted his superiority, and that he was an honor to the city. They pointed him out, saying, "To him is due the glory of having invented the escapement!"

Indeed, it is from this invention, which the labors of Zacharius will later make clear, that is to be dated the birth of the real science of clockmaking.

One winter's evening old Scholastique was serving supper, in which, according to ancient usage, she was aided by the young apprentice. Though carefully prepared dishes were offered to Master Zacharius in fine blue-and-white porcelain, he ate nothing. He scarcely replied to the soft questionings of Gerande, who was visibly affected by the gloomy silence of her father; and the garrulousness of Scholastique herself only struck his ear like the grumblings of the river, to which he no longer paid attention. After this silent repast the old clockmaker left the table without embracing his daughter, nor did he, as usual, bid the rest "good-evening." He disappeared through the narrow door which conducted to his retreat, and the staircase fairly creaked under his heavy tread.

Gerande, Aubert, and Scholastique remained silent for some moments. The weather was gloomy; the clouds

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dragged themselves heavily along the Alps, and threatened to dissolve in rain; the severe temperature of Switzerland filled the soul with melancholy, while the midland winds prowled among the hills and whistled drearily.

"Do you know, my dear demoiselle," said Scholastique at last, "that our master has kept wholly to himself for some days? Holy Virgin! I see he has not been hungry, for his words have remained in his stomach, and the Devil himself would be adroit to force one out of him!"

"My father has some secret trouble which I cannot even guess," replied Gerande, a sad anxiety betraying itself in her countenance.

"Mademoiselle, do not permit so much sadness to overshadow your heart. You know the singular habits of Master Zacharius. Who can read his secret thoughts in his face? Something annoying has no doubt happened to him, but he will have forgotten it by to-morrow, and will repent having made his daughter anxious."

It was Aubert who spoke thus, glancing at Gerande's lovely eyes. Aubert was the first apprentice whom Master Zacharius had ever admitted to the intimacy of his labors, for he appreciated his intelligence, discretion, and goodness of heart; and this young man had attached himself to Gerande with that mysterious faith which presides over heroic denouements.

Gerande was eighteen years of age. The oval of her face recalled that of the artless Madonnas, whom veneration still displays at the street corners of the antique towns of Brittany. Her eyes betrayed an infinite simplicity. She was beloved as the most delicate realization of a poet's dream. Whilst, night and morning, she read her Latin prayers in her iron-clasped missal, Gerande also discovered a hidden sentiment in Aubert Thun's heart, and comprehended what a profound devotion the young workman had for her. Indeed, the whole world in his eyes was condensed in this old house of the clockmaker, and he passed all his time near the young girl, when, the hours of work over, he left her father's workshop.

Old Scholastique saw all this, but said nothing. Her loquacity exhausted itself in preference on the evils of the times, and the little worries of the household. Nobody tried to stop its course. It was with her as with the musi-

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cal snuff-boxes which they made at Geneva; once wound up, unless you broke her, she would play all her airs through.

Finding Gerande absorbed in a melancholy silence, Scholastique left her old wooden chair, fixed a taper on the end of a candlestick, lit it, and placed it near a small waxen Virgin, sheltered in her niche of stone. It was the family custom to kneel before this protecting Madonna of the domestic hearth, and to beg her kindly watchfulness during the coming night; but on this evening, Gerande remained silent in her seat.

"Well, well, dear demoiselle," said the astonished Scholastique, "supper is over, and it is time to go to bed. Why do you tire your eyes by sitting up late? Ah, Holy Virgin! It is much better to sleep, and to get a little comfort from happy dreams! In these detestable times in which we live, who can promise herself a fortunate day?"

"Ought we not to send for a doctor for my father?" asked Gerande.

"A doctor!" cried the old domestic. "Has Master Zacharius ever listened to their fancies and pompous sayings? He might accept medicines for the watches, but not for the body!"

"What shall we do?" murmured Gerande. "Has he gone to work, or has he retired?"

"Gerande," answered Aubert, softly, "some mental trouble annoys your father, and that is all."

"Do you know what it is, Aubert?"

"Perhaps, Gerande."

"Tell us, then," cried Scholastique, eagerly, prudently extinguishing her taper.

"For several days, Gerande," said the young apprentice, "something absolutely incomprehensible has been going on. All the watches which your father has made and sold for some years have suddenly stopped. Very many of them have been brought back to him. He has carefully taken them to pieces; the springs were in good condition, and the wheels well set. He has put them together yet more carefully; but, despite his skill, they have refused to go."

"The devil's in it!" cried Scholastique.

"Why say you so?" asked Gerande. "It seems very

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natural to me. All things are limited in the world. The infinite cannot be fashioned by the hands of men."

"It is none the less true," returned Aubert, "that there is in this something very mysterious and extraordinary. I have myself been helping Master Zacharius to search for the cause of this derangement of his watches; but I have not been able to find it, and more than once I have despairingly let my tools fall from my hands."

"But why undertake so vain a task?" resumed Scholastique. "Is it natural that a little copper instrument should go of itself, and mark the hours? We ought to have kept to the sun-dial!"

"You will not talk thus, Scholastique," said Aubert, "when you learn that the sun-dial was invented by Cain."

"O Lord! what are you telling me?"

"Do you think," asked Gerande, simply, "that we might pray to God to give life to my father's watches?"

"Without doubt," replied Aubert.

"Good! These will be useless prayers," grumbled the old servant, "but Heaven will pardon them for their good intent."

The taper was relighted. Scholastique, Gerande, and Aubert knelt down together upon the flags of the room. The young girl prayed for her mother's soul, for a blessing for the night, for travelers and prisoners, for the good and the wicked, and more earnestly than all for the unknown misfortunes of her father. Then the three devout souls rose with somewhat of confidence in their hearts, for they had laid their sorrow in God's bosom.

Aubert repaired to his own room; Gerande sat pensively by the window, whilst the last lights were disappearing from the city streets. The terrors of this winter's night had increased. Sometimes, with the whirlpools of the river, the wind engulfed itself among the piles, and the whole house shivered and shook; but the young girl, absorbed in her sadness, thought only of her father. After hearing what Aubert told her, the malady of Master Zacharius took fantastic proportions in her mind; and it seemed to her as if his dear existence, become purely mechanical, moved now with pain and effort on its exhausted pivots.

Suddenly the shutters, impelled by the squall, struck against the windows of the room. The young girl leaned

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out of the window to draw to the shutter shaken by the wind, but she feared to do so. It seemed to her that the rain and the river, confounding their tumultous waters, were submerging the frail house, the planks of which were creaking in every direction. She would have flown from her chamber, but she saw below the flickering of a light which appeared to come from Master Zacharius's retreat, and in one of those momentary calms, during which the elements keep a sudden silence, her ear caught plaintive sounds. She tried to shut her window, but could not. The wind violently repelled her, like a villain who was introducing himself into a dwelling.

Gerande thought she would go mad from terror. What was her father doing? She opened the door, and it escaped from her hands, and shook loudly under the attack of the tempest. Gerande then found herself in the dark supper-room, succeeded in gaining, on tiptoe, the staircase which led to her father's shop, and, pale and fainting, glided down.

The old watchmaker was upright in the middle of the room, which was filled with the groans of the river. His bristling hair gave him a sinister aspect. He was talking and gesticulating, without seeing or hearing anything. Gerande arrested her steps on the threshold.

"It is death!" said Master Zacharius, in a thick voice; "it is death! Why should I live longer, now that I have dispersed my existence over the earth? For I, Master Zacharius, am really the creator of all the watches that I have fashioned! It is a part of my very soul that I have shut up in each of these boxes of iron, silver, or gold! Every time that one of these accursed watches stops, I feel my heart cease beating, for I have regulated them with its pulsations!"

As he spoke in this strange way, the old man cast his eyes on his bench. There lay all the pieces of a watch that he had carefully taken apart. He took up a sort of hollow cylinder, called a barrel, in which the spring is enclosed, and removed the steel spiral, which, instead of relaxing itself, according to the laws of its elasticity, remained coiled on itself, like a sleeping viper. It seemed knotted, like those impotent old men whose blood has long been congealed. Master Zacharius vainly essayed to uncoil it

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with his thin fingers, the outlines of which were exaggerated on the wall; but he tried in vain, and soon, with a terrible cry of anguish and rage, he threw it through the peephole into the boiling Rhone.

Gerande, her feet riveted to the floor, stood breathless and motionless. She wished to approach her father, but could not. Giddy hallucinations took possession of her. Suddenly she heard, in the shade, a voice murmur in her ears, "Gerande, dear Gerande! grief still keeps you awake! Go in again, I beg of you; the night is cold."

"Aubert!" whispered the young girl. "You!"

"Ought I not to be disturbed by what disturbs you?"

These soft words sent the blood back into the young girl's heart. She leaned on Aubert's arm, and said to him, "My father is very ill, Aubert! You alone can cure him, for this disorder of the mind would not yield to his daughter's consolings. His mind is attacked by a very natural delusion, and in working with him, repairing the watches, you will bring him back to reason. Aubert," she continued, "it is not true, is it, that his life confounds itself with that of his watches?"

Aubert did not reply.

"Then it must be a calling reproved of God—that of my father?"

"I know not," returned the apprentice, warming the cold hands of the girl with his own. "But go back to your room, my poor Gerande, and with sleep recover hope!"

Gerande slowly returned to her chamber, and remained there till daylight; sleep did not weigh down her eyelids. Meanwhile, Master Zacharius, always mute and motionless, gazed at the river as it rolled turbulently at his feet.

CHAPTER II

THE PRIDE OF SCIENCE

THE severity of a Geneva merchant in business matters has become proverbial. He is rigidly honorable, and excessively just. What must, then, have been the shame of Master Zacharius, when he saw these watches, which he had so carefully constructed, returning to him from every direction?

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It was certain that these watches had suddenly stopped, and without any apparent reason. The wheels were in a good condition and firmly fixed, but the springs had lost all elasticity. Vainly did the watchmaker try to replace them; the wheels remained motionless. These unaccountable derangements were greatly to the old man's discredit. His noble inventions had many times brought upon him suspicions of sorcery, which now seemed confirmed. These rumors reached Gerande, and she often trembled for her father, when she saw the malicious glances directed towards him.

Yet on the morning after this night of anguish, Master Zacharius seemed to resume work with some confidence. The morning sun inspired him with some courage. Aubert hastened to join him in the shop, and received an affable "good-day."

"I am getting on better," said the old man. "I don't know what strange troubles of the head attacked me yesterday, but the sun has quite chased them away, with the clouds of the night."

"In faith, master," returned Aubert, "I don't like the night for either of us!"

"And thou art right, Aubert. If you ever become a superior man, you will understand that day is as necessary to you as food. A man of merit owes himself to the homage of the rest of mankind who recognize his worth."

"Master, it seems to me that the pride of science has possessed you."

"Pride, Aubert! Destroy my past, annihilate my present, dissipate my future, and then it will be permitted to me to live in obscurity! Poor boy, who comprehends not the sublime things to which my art is wholly devoted! Art thou not but a tool in my hands?"

"Yet, Master Zacharius," resumed Aubert, "I have more than once merited your praise for the manner in which I adjusted the most delicate pieces of your watches and clocks."

"No doubt, Aubert; thou art a good workman, such as I love; but when thou workest, thou thinkest thou hast in thy hands but copper, silver, gold; thou dost not perceive these metals, which my genius animates, palpitating like

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living flesh! Thus thou wouldst not die, with the death of thy works!"

Master Zacharius remained silent after these words; but Aubert essayed to keep up the conversation. "Indeed, master," said he, "I love to see you work so unceasingly! You will be ready for the festival of our corporation, for I see that the work on this crystal watch is going forward famously."

"No doubt, Aubert," cried the old watchmaker, "and it will be no slight honor for me to have been able to cut and shape the crystal to the durability of a diamond! Ah, Louis Berghen did well to perfect the art of diamond-cutting, which has enabled me to polish and pierce the hardest stones!"

Master Zacharius was holding several small watch pieces of cut crystal, and of exquisite workmanship. The wheels, pivots, and box of the watch were of the same material, and he had employed remarkable skill in this very difficult task. "Would it not be fine," said he, his face flushing, "to see this watch palpitating beneath its transparent envelope, and to be able to count the very beatings of its heart?"

"I will wager, sir," replied the young apprentice, "that it will not vary a second in a year."

"And you would wager on a certainty! Have I not imparted to it all that is purest of myself? And does my heart itself vary?"

Aubert did not dare to lift his eyes to his master's transfigured face.

"Tell me frankly," said the old man, sadly. "Have you never taken me for a fool? Do you not think me sometimes subject to dangerous folly? Yes; is it not? In my daughter's eyes and yours, I have often read my condemnation. Oh!" he cried, as if in pain, "to be not understood by those whom one most loves in the world! But I will prove victoriously to thee, Aubert, that I am right! Do not bow thy head, for thou wilt be stupefied. The day on which thou understandest how to listen to and comprehend me, thou wilt see that I have discovered the secrets of existence, the secrets of the mysterious union of the soul with the body!"

As he spoke thus, Master Zacharius appeared superb in

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his vanity. His eyes glittered with a supernatural fire, and his pride illumined every feature. And truly, if ever vanity was excusable, it was such vanity as that of Master Zacharius!

The watchmaker's art, indeed, down to his time, had remained almost in its infancy. From the day when Plato, four centuries before the Christian era, invented the night watch, a sort of clepsydra which indicated the hours of the night by the sound and playing of a flute, the science had continued nearly stationary. The masters paid more attention to the arts than to mechanics, and it was the period of beautiful watches of iron, copper, wood, silver, which were richly engraved. like one of Cellini's ewers. They made a masterpiece of chasing, which measured time very imperfectly, but was still a masterpiece. When the artist's imagination was not directed to the perfection of modeling, it sought to create clocks with moving figures and melodious sounds, which were put in operation in a very diverting fashion. Besides, who troubled himself, in those days, with regulating the advance of the hours? The delays of the law were not as yet invented; the physical and astronomical sciences had not as yet established their calculations on scrupulously exact measurements; there were neither establishments which were shut at a given hour, nor trains which departed at a precise moment. In the evening the curfew bell sounded; and at night the hours were cried amid the universal silence. Certainly people did not live so long, if existence is measured by the amount of business done; but they lived better. The mind was enriched with the noble sentiments born of the contemplation of masterpieces. They built a church in two centuries, a painter painted but few pictures in the course of his life, a poet only composed one great work; but these were so many masterpieces.

When the exact sciences began at last to make some progress, watch and clock making followed in their path, though it was always arrested by an insurmountable difficulty,—the regular and continuous measurement of time.

It was in the midst of this stagnation that Master Zacharius invented the escapement, which enabled him to obtain a mathematical regularity by submitting the movement of the pendulum to a constant force. This invention

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had turned the old man's head. Pride, swelling in his heart, like mercury in the thermometer, had attained the height of transcendent folly. By analogy he had allowed himself to be drawn to materialistic conclusions, and as he constructed his watches, he fancied that he had surprised the hitherto undiscovered secrets of the union of the soul with the body.

So it was that, on this day, perceiving that Aubert listened to him attentively, he said to him in a tone of simple conviction, "Dost thou know what life is, my child? Hast thou comprehended the action of those springs which produce existence? Hast thou examined thyself? No; and yet, with the eyes of science, thou mightst have seen the intimate relation which exists between God's work and my own, for it is from his creature that I have copied the combinations of the wheels of my clocks."

"Master," replied Aubert, eagerly, "can you compare a copper or steel machine with that breath of God which is called the soul, which animates our bodies, as the breeze lends motion to the flowers? What mechanism could be so adjusted as to inspire us with thought?"

"That is not the question," responded Master Zacharius, gently, but with all the obstinacy of a blind man walking towards an abyss. "In order to understand me, thou must recall the object of the escapement which I have invented. When I saw the irregular working of clocks, I understood that the movements shut up in them did not suffice, and that it was necessary to submit them to the regularity of some independent force. I then thought that the balance-wheel might accomplish this, and I succeeded in regulating the movement! Now, was it not a sublime idea that came to me, to return to it its lost force by the action of the clock itself, which it was charged with regulating?"

Aubert assented by a motion.

"Now, Aubert," continued the old man, growing animated, "cast thine eyes upon thyself! Dost thou not understand that there are two distinct forces in us, that of the soul and that of the body, that is, a movement and a regulator? The soul is the principle of life; that is, then, the movement. Whether it is produced by a weight, by a spring, or by an immaterial influence, it is none the less

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at the heart. But without the body this movement would be unequal, irregular, impossible! Thus the body regulates the soul, and, like the balance-wheel, it is submitted to regular oscillations. And this is so true, that one falls ill when one's drink, food, sleep—in a word, the functions of the body—are not properly regulated! As in my watches, the soul renders to the body the force lost by its oscillations. Well, what produces this intimate union between soul and body, if not a marvelous escapement, by which the wheels of the one work into the wheels of the other? This is what I have divined, applied; and there are no longer any secrets for me in this life, which is, after all, but an ingenious mechanism!"

Master Zacharius was sublime to see in this hallucination, which transported him to the ultimate mysteries of the infinite. But his daughter Gerande, standing on the threshold of the door, had heard all. She rushed into her father's arms, and he pressed her convulsively to his breast.

"What is the matter with thee, my daughter?" he asked.

"If I had only a spring here," said she, putting her hand on her heart, "I would not love you as I do, my father."

Master Zacharius looked intently at Gerande, and did not reply. Suddenly he uttered a cry, carried his hand eagerly to his heart, and fell fainting on his old leathern chair.

"Father, what is the matter?"

"Help!" cried Aubert. "Scholastique!"

But Scholastique did not come at once. Someone was knocking at the front door; she had gone to open it, and when she returned to the shop, before she could open her mouth, the old watchmaker, having recovered his senses, spoke: "I divine, my old Scholastique, that you bring me still another of those accursed watches which have stopped."

"O Lord, it is true enough!" replied Scholastique, handing a watch to Aubert.

"My heart could not be mistaken!" said the old man, with a sigh.

Aubert carefully adjusted the watch, but it would not go.

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CHAPTER III
A STRANGE VISIT

Poor Gerande would have lost her life with that of her father, had it not been for the thought of Aubert, who still attached her to the world. The old watchmaker was, little by little, passing away. His faculties evidently grew more feeble, as he concentrated them on a single thought. By a sad association of ideas, he referred everything to his monomania, and human existence seemed to have departed from him. Moreover, certain malicious rivals revived the hostile rumors which had spread concerning his labors.

The news of the strange derangements which his watches betrayed had a prodigious effect upon the master clockmakers of Geneva. What signified this sudden inertia of their wheels, and why these strange relations which they seemed to have with the old man's life? These were the kind of mysteries which people never contemplate without a secret terror. In the various classes of the town, from the apprentices to the great lords who used his watches, there was no one who could not himself judge of the singularity of the fact. The citizens wished, but in vain, to penetrate to Master Zacharius. He fell very ill; and this enabled his daughter to withdraw him from incessant visits, which thereupon degenerated into reproaches and recriminations.

Medicines and physicians were powerless in presence of this organic wasting away, the cause of which could not be discovered. It sometimes seemed as if the old man's heart had ceased to beat; then the pulsations were resumed with an alarming irregularity.

A custom existed, in those days, of submitting the works of the masters to the judgment of the people. The heads of the various corporations sought to distinguish themselves by the novelty or the perfection of their productions, and it was among these that the condition of Master Zacharius excited the most lively, because most interested, commiseration. His rivals pitied him the more willingly, the less he was to be feared. They never forgot the old man's success, when he exhibited his magnificent clocks with moving figures, his striking watches, which provoked the general admiration, and commanded such high prices in the cities of France, Switzerland, and Germany.

Meanwhile, thanks to the constant and tender care of

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Gerande and Aubert, his strength seemed to return a little, and in the tranquillity in which his convalescence left him, he succeeded in detaching himself from the thoughts which had absorbed him. As soon as he could walk, his daughter lured him away from the house, which was still besieged with dissatisfied intruders. Aubert remained in the shop, vainly adjusting and readjusting the rebel watches; and the poor boy, completely mystified, sometimes covered his face in his hands, fearful that he, like his master, might go mad.

So it came about that the old watchmaker at last perceived that he was not alone in the world. As he looked upon his young and lovely daughter, himself old and broken, he reflected that after his death she would be left alone, without support. Many of the young mechanics of Geneva had already sought to win Gerande's love; but none of them had succeeded in gaining access to the impenetrable retreat of the watchmaker's household. It was natural, then, that during this lucid interval the old man's choice should fall on Aubert Thun. Once struck with this thought, he remarked to himself that this young couple had been brought up with the same ideas and the same beliefs, and the oscillations of their hearts seemed to him, as he said one day to Scholastique, "isochronal."

The old servant, literally delighted with the word, though she did not understand it, swore by her holy patron saint that the whole town should hear it within a quarter of an hour. Master Zacharius found it difficult to calm her, but made her promise to keep on this subject a silence which she never was known to observe.

So, though Gerande and Aubert were ignorant of it, all Geneva was soon talking of their speedy union. But it happened also that, while the worthy folk were gossiping, a strange chuckle was often heard, and a voice saying, "Gerande will not wed Aubert."

If the gossipers turned round, they found themselves facing a little old man who was quite a stranger to them.

How old was this singular being? No one could have told. People conjectured that he must have existed for several centuries, and that was all. His big flat head rested upon shoulders the width of which was equal to the height of his body; this was not above three feet. This personage would have figured well on a pendulum fulcrum, for

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the dial would have naturally been placed on his face, and the balance-wheel would have oscillated at its ease in his chest. His nose might readily be taken for the style of a sun-dial, for it was small and sharp; his teeth, far apart, resembled the gearing of a wheel, and ground themselves between his lips; his voice had the metallic sound of a bell, and you could hear his heart beat like the tick-tick of a clock. This little man, whose arms moved like the needles on a dial, walked with jerks, without ever turning round. If anyone followed him, it was found that he walked a league an hour, and that his course was nearly circular.

This strange being had not long been seen wandering, or rather circulating, around the town; but it had already been observed that, every day, at the moment when the sun passed the meridian, he stopped before the Cathedral of Saint Pierre, and resumed his course after the twelve strokes of midday had sounded. Excepting at this precise moment, he seemed to become a part of all the conversations in which the old watchmaker was talked of, and people asked each other, in terror, what relation could exist between him and Master Zacharius. It was remarked, too, that he never lost sight of the old man and his daughter while they were taking their promenades.

One day Gerande perceived this monster looking at her with a hideous smile. She clung to her father with a frightened motion.

"What is the matter, my Gerande?" asked Master Zacharius.

"I do not know," replied the young girl.

"But thou art changed, my child. Art thou going to fall ill in thy turn? Ah, well," he added, with a sad smile, "then I must take care of thee, and I will do it tenderly."

"O father, it will be nothing. I am cold, and I imagine that it is——"

"What, Gerande?"

"The presence of that man, who always follows us," she replied in a low tone.

Master Zacharius turned towards the little old man. "Faith, he goes well," said he, with a satisfied air, "for it is just four o'clock. Fear nothing, my child; it is not a man, it is a clock!"

Gerande looked at her father in terror. How could

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Master Zacharius read the hour on this strange creature's visage?

"By the by," continued the old watchmaker, paying no further attention to the matter, "I have not seen Aubert for several days."

"He has not left us, however, father," said Gerande, whose thoughts turned into a gentler channel.

"What is he doing, then?"

"He is working."

"Ah!" cried the old man. "He is at work repairing my watches, is he not? But he will never succeed; for it is not repairs they need, but a resurrection!"

Gerande remained silent.

"I must know," added the old man, "if they have brought back any more of those damned watches, upon which the Devil has imposed an epidemic!"

After these words Master Zacharius fell into absolute taciturnity, till he knocked at the door of his house, and for the first time since his convalescence descended to his shop, while Gerande sadly repaired to her chamber.

At this moment when Master Zacharius crossed the threshold of his shop, one of the many clocks suspended on the wall struck five o'clock. Usually the bells of these clocks—admirably regulated as they were—struck simultaneously, and this rejoiced the old man's heart; but on this day the bells struck one after another, so that for a quarter of an hour the ear was deafened by the successive noise. Master Zacharius suffered terribly; he could not remain still, but went from one clock to the other, and beat the measure for them, as an orchestra leader who has no longer control over his musicians.

When the last had ceased striking, the door of the shop opened, and Master Zacharius shuddered from head to foot to see before him the little old man, who looked fixedly at him and said, "Master, may I not speak with you a few moments?"

"Who are you?" asked the watchmaker, abruptly.

"A colleague. I am charged with regulating the sun."

"Ah, you regulate the sun!" replied Master Zacharius, eagerly, without wincing. "I can scarcely compliment you upon it. Your sun goes badly, to make ourselves agree with it, we have to keep advancing and retarding our clocks!"

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"And, by the Devil's cloven foot," cried this weird personage, "you are right, my master! My sun does not always indicate midday at the same moment as your clocks; but some day it will be known that this is because of the inequality of the movement of the earth's transfer, and a mean midday will be invented which will regulate this irregularity!"

"Shall I live till then?" asked the old man, with glistening eyes.

"Without doubt," replied the little old man, laughing. "Can you believe that you will ever die?"

"Alas! I am very ill."

"Ah, let us talk of that. By Beelzebub! that will lead to just what I wish to speak to you about."

Saying this, the strange being leaped upon the old leather chair, and carried his legs one under the other, after the fashion of the bones which the painters of funeral hangings cross beneath skulls. Then he resumed, in an ironical tone, "See, Master Zacharius, what is going on in this good town of Geneva? They say that your health is failing, that your watches have need of a doctor!"

"Ah, you believe that there is an intimate relation between their existence and mine?" cried Master Zacharius.

"Why, I imagine that these watches have faults, even vices. If these wantons do not preserve a regular conduct, it is right that they should bear the consequences of their irregularity. It seems to me that they have need of reforming a little!"

"What do you call faults?" asked Master Zacharius, reddening at the sarcastic tone in which these words were uttered. "Have they not a right to be proud of their origin?"

"Not too proud, not too proud," replied the little old man. "They bear a celebrated name, and an illustrious signature is graven on their cases, it is true, and theirs is the exclusive privilege of being introduced among the noblest families; but for some time they have become deranged, and you can do nothing about it, Master Zacharius; and the stupidest apprentice in Geneva could prove it to you!"

"To me, to me!" cried Master Zacharius, with a flush of outraged pride.

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"To you, Master Zacharius—you, who cannot restore life to your watches!"

"But it is because I have a fever, and so have they also!" replied the old man, as a cold sweat broke out upon him.

"Very well, they will die with you, since you are prevented from imparting a little elasticity to their springs."

"Die! No, for you yourself have said it! I cannot die,—I, the first watchmaker in the world; I, who, by means of these pieces and diverse wheels, have been able to regulate the movement with absolute precision! Have I not subjected time to exact laws, and can I not dispose of it like a despot? Before a sublime genius had disposed regularly these wandering hours, in what vast waste was human destiny plunged? At what certain moment could the acts of life be connected with each other? But you, man or devil, whatever you may be, have never considered the magnificence of my art, which calls every science to its aid! No, no! I, Master Zacharius, cannot die, for, as I have regulated time, time would end with me! It would return to the infinite, whence my genius has rescued it, and it would lose itself irreparably in the gulf of chaos! No, I can no more die than the Creator of this universe, submitted to its laws! I have become his equal, and I have partaken of his power! If God has created eternity, Master Zacharius has created time!"

The old watchmaker now resembled the fallen angel, defiant in the presence of the Creator. The little old man seemed to breathe into him this impious transport.

"Well said, master," he replied. "Beelzebub had less right than you to compare himself with God! Your glory must not perish! So your servant desires to give you the method of controlling these rebellious watches."

"What is it? what is it?" cried Master Zacharius.

"You shall know on the day after that on which you have given me your daughter's hand."

"My Gerande?"

"Herself!"

"My daughter's heart is not free," replied Master Zacharius, who seemed neither astonished nor angry.

"Bah! She is not the least beautiful of watches; but she will end by stopping also——"

"My daughter,—my Gerande! No!"

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"Well, return to your watches, Master Zacharius. Adjust and readjust them. Get ready the marriage of your daughter and your apprentice. Temper your springs with your best steel. Bless Aubert and the pretty Gerande. But remember, your watches will never go, and Gerande will not wed Aubert!"

Thereupon the little old man disappeared so quickly that Master Zacharius could not hear six o'clock strike in his breast.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH OF ST. PIERRE

MASTER ZACHARIUS became more feeble in mind and body every day. An unusual excitement, indeed, impelled him to continue his work more eagerly than ever, nor could his daughter entice him from it. From morning till night discontented purchasers besieged the house, and they got access to the old watchmaker himself, who knew not which of them to listen to.

"This watch is too slow, and I cannot succeed in regulating it," said one.

"This," said another, "is absolutely obstinate, and stands still, as did Joshua's sun."

"If it is true," said most of them, "that your health has an influence on that of your watches, Master Zacharius, get well as soon as possible."

The old man gazed at these people with haggard eyes, and only replied by shaking his head, or by a few sad words: "Wait till the first fine weather, my friends. The season is coming which revives existence in wearied bodies. The sun must come to warm us all!"

"A fine thing, if my watches are to be ill through the winter!" said one of the most angry. "Do you know, Master Zacharius, that your name is inscribed in full on their faces? By the Virgin, you do little honor to your signature!"

It happened at last that the old man, abashed by these reproaches, took some pieces of gold from his old trunk, and began to buy back the damaged watches. At news of this, the customers came in a crowd, and the poor watch-

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maker's money fast melted away; but his honesty remained intact. Gerande warmly praised his delicacy, which was leading him straight towards ruin; and Aubert soon offered his own savings to his master.

Scholastique alone refused to listen to reason on the subject; but her efforts failed to prevent the unwelcome visitors from reaching her master, and from soon departing with some valuable object. Then her chattering was heard in all the streets of the neighborhood, where she had long been known. She eagerly denied the rumors of sorcery and magic on the part of Master Zacharius, which gained currency; but as at bottom she was persuaded of their truth, she said her prayers over and over again to redeem her pious falsehoods.

It had been noticed that for some time the old watchmaker had neglected his religious duties. Time was, when he had accompanied Gerande to church, and had seemed to find in prayer the intellectual charm which it imparts to thoughtful minds, as it is the most sublime exercise of the imagination. This voluntary neglect of holy practices, added to the secret habits of his life, had in some sort confirmed the accusations leveled against his labors. So, with the double purpose of drawing her father back to God and to the world, Gerande resolved to call religion to her aid. She thought that it might give some vitality to his dying soul; but the dogmas of faith and humility had to combat, in the soul of Master Zacharius, an insurmountable pride, and came into collision with that vanity of science which connects everything with itself, without rising to the infinite source whence first principles flow. It was under these circumstances that the young girl undertook her father's conversion, and her influence was so effective that the old watchmaker promised to attend high mass at the Cathedral on the following Sunday.

Old Scholastique could not contain her joy, and at last found irrefutable arguments against the gossiping tongues, which accused her master of impiety. She spoke of it to her neighbors, her friends, her enemies, to those whom she knew not as well as to those whom she knew.

"In faith, we scarcely believe what you tell us, dame Scholastique," they replied; "Master Zacharius has always acted in concert with the devil!"

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"You haven't counted, then," replied the old servant, "the fine bells which strike for my master's clocks? How many times they have struck the hours of prayer and the mass!"

"No doubt," they would reply. "But has he not invented machines which go all by themselves, and which actually do the work of a real man?"

"Could a child of the devil," exclaimed dame Scholastique, wrathfully, "have executed the fine iron clock of the château of Andermatt, which the town of Geneva was not rich enough to buy? A pious motto appeared at each hour, and a Christian who obeyed them would have gone straight to Paradise! Is that the work of the devil?"

This masterpiece, made twenty years before, had carried Master Zacharius's fame to its acme; but even then there had been accusations against him of sorcery. At least, the old man's visit to the Cathedral would reduce malicious tongues to silence.

The Sunday so ardently anticipated by Gerande at last arrived. The weather was fine, and the temperature inspiriting. The people of Geneva were passing quietly through the streets, gayly chatting about the return of spring. Gerande, tenderly taking the old man's arm, directed her steps towards the Cathedral, while Scholastique followed behind with the prayer-books. People looked curiously at them as they passed. The old watchmaker permitted himself to be led like a child, or rather like a blind man. The faithful of Saint Pierre were almost frightened when they saw him cross the threshold, and shrank back at his approach.

The chants of high mass were already resounding through the church. Gerande advanced to her accustomed bench, and kneeled with profound and simple reverence. Master Zacharius remained standing beside her.

The ceremonies continued with the majestic solemnity of that pious age, but the old man had no faith. He did not implore the pity of Heaven with cries of anguish of the "Kyrie"; he did not, with the "Gloria in Excelsis," sing the splendors of the celestial heights; the reading of the Testament did not draw him from his materialistic revery, and he forgot to join in the homage of the "Credo." This proud old man remained motionless, as insensible and si-

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lent as a stone statue; and even at the solemn moment when the bell announced the miracle of transubstantiation, he did not bow his head, but gazed directly at the sacred host which the priest raised above the heads of the faithful. Gerande looked at her father, and a flood of tears moistened her missal.

At this moment the clock of Saint Pierre struck half past eleven. Master Zacharius turned quickly towards this ancient clock which he had regulated and which still spoke. It seemed to him as if its face was gazing steadily at him; the figures of the hours shone as if they had been engraved in lines of fire, and the hands darted forth electric sparks from their sharp points.

The mass ended. It was customary for the "Angelus" to be said at noon, and the priests, before leaving the altar, waited for the clock to strike the hour of twelve. In a few moments this prayer would ascend to the feet of the Virgin. But suddenly a harsh noise was heard. Master Zacharius uttered a piercing cry.

The large hand of the clock, having reached twelve, had abruptly stopped, and the clock did not strike the hour.

Gerande hastened to her father's aid. He had fallen down motionless, and they carried him outside the church. "It is the death-blow!" murmured Gerande, sobbing.

When he had been borne home, Master Zacharius lay upon his bed utterly crushed. Life seemed only to still exist on the surface of his body, like the last whiffs of smoke about a lamp just extinguished.

When he came to his senses, Aubert and Gerande were leaning over him. At this supreme moment the future took in his eyes the shape of the present. He saw his daughter alone, without support. "My son," said he to Aubert, "I give my daughter to thee."

So saying, he stretched out his hand towards his two children, who were thus united at his death-bed.

But soon Master Zacharius lifted himself up in a paroxysm of rage. The words of the little old man recurred to his mind. "I do not wish to die!" he cried; "I cannot die! I, Master Zacharius, ought not to die! My books,—my accounts!"

He sprang from his bed towards a book in which the names of his customers, and the articles which had been

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sold to them, were inscribed. He seized it and rapidly turned over its leaves, and his emaciated thumb fixed itself on one of the pages.

"There!" he cried, "there! this old iron clock, sold to Pittonaccio! It is the only one that has not been returned to me! It still exists,—it goes,—it lives! Ah, I wish for it,—I must find it! I will take such care of it that death will no longer seek me!" And he fainted away.

Aubert and Gerande knelt by the old man's bedside, and prayed together.

CHAPTER V

THE HOUR OF DEATH

SEVERAL days passed, and Master Zacharius, though almost dying, rose from his bed and returned to active life, under a supernatural excitement. He lived by pride. But Gerande did not deceive herself; her father's body and soul were forever lost.

The old man got together his last resources, without thought of those who were dependent upon him. He betrayed an incredible energy, walking, ferreting about, and mumbling strange, incomprehensible words. One morning Gerande went down to his shop. Master Zacharius was not there. She waited for him all day. Master Zacharius did not return.

"Where can he be?" Aubert asked himself. An inspiration suddenly came to his mind. He remembered the last words which Master Zacharius had spoken. The old man only lived now in the old iron clock that had not been returned! Master Zacharius must have gone in search of it. Aubert spoke of this to Gerande.

"Let us look at my father's book," she replied.

They descended to the shop. The book was open on the bench. All the watches or clocks made by the old man, and which had been returned to him out of order, were stricken out, excepting one. "Sold to M. Pittonaccio, an iron clock, with bell and moving figures; sent to his château at Andermatt."

It was this "moral" clock of which Scholastique had spoken with so much enthusiasm.

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"My father is there!" cried Gerande.

"Let us hasten thither," replied Aubert. "We may still save him!"

"Not for this life," murmured Gerande, "but at least for the other."

"By the grace of God, Gerande! The château of Andermatt stands in the gorge of the 'Dents-du-Midi,' twenty hours from Geneva. Let us go!"

That very evening Aubert and Gerande, followed by the old servant, set out on foot by the road which skirts Lake Leman. At last, late the next day, they reached the hermitage of Notre-Dame, which is situated at the base of the Dents-du-Midi, six hundred feet above the Rhone. They were nearly dead with fatigue. The hermit received the wanderers as night was falling. They could not have gone another step, and here they must needs rest.

The hermit could give them no news of Master Zacharius. They could scarcely hope to find him still living amid these sad solitudes. The night was dark, the wind howled amid the mountains, and the avalanches roared and thundered down from the summits of the broken crags.

Aubert and Gerande, crouching before the hermit's hearth, told him their melancholy tale. Their mantles, covered with snow, were drying in a corner; and without, the hermit's dog barked lugubriously, and mingled his voice with that of the tempest.

"Pride," said the hermit to his guests, "has lost an angel created for good. It is the obstacle against which the destinies of man strike. You cannot oppose reasoning to pride, the principal of all the vices, since, by its very nature, the proud man refuses to listen to it. It only remains, then, to pray for your father!"

All four knelt down, when the barking of the dog redoubled, and someone knocked at the door of the hermitage. "Open, in the name of the devil!"

The door yielded under the blows, and a disheveled, haggard, ill-clothed man appeared.

"My father!" cried Gerande. It was Master Zacharius.

"Where am I?" said he. "In eternity! Time is ended,—the hours no longer strike,—the hands have stopped!"

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"Father!" returned Gerande, with so piteous an emotion that the old man seemed to return to the world of the living.

"Thou here, Gerande?" he cried; "and thou, Aubert? Ah, my dear betrothed ones, you are going to be married in our old church!"

"Father," said Gerande, seizing him by the arm, "come home to Geneva,—come with us!"

"Do not abandon your children!" cried Aubert.

"Why return?" replied the old man, sadly, "to those places which my life has already quitted, and where a part of myself is forever buried?"

"Your soul is not dead!" said the hermit, solemnly.

"My soul? O no,—its wheels are good! I perceive it beating regularly——"

"Your soul is immaterial,—your soul is immortal!" replied the hermit, sternly.

"Yes,—like my glory! But it is shut up in the château of Andermatt, and I wish to see it again!"

The hermit crossed himself; Scholastique became almost inanimate. Aubert held Gerande in his arms.

"The château of Andermatt is inhabited by one who is damned," said the hermit, "one who does not salute the cross of my hermitage."

"My father, go not thither!"

"I want my soul! My soul is mine——"

"Hold him! Hold my father!" cried Gerande.

But the old man had leaped across the threshold, and plunged into the night, crying, "Mine, mine, my soul!"

Gerande, Aubert, and Scholastique hastened after him. They went by difficult paths, across which Master Zacharius sped like a tempest, urged by an irresistible force. The snow raged round them, and mingled its white flakes with the froth of the tumbling torrents.

The château of Andermatt was a ruin even then. A thick, crumbling tower rose above it, and seemed to menace with its downfall the old gables which reared themselves below. The vast piles of jagged stones frowned gloomily to the right. Several dark halls appeared amid the débris, with caved-in ceilings, now become the abode of vipers.

A low and narrow postern, opening upon a ditch choked with rubbish, gave access to the château. No doubt some

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margrave, half lord, half brigand, had inherited it; to the margrave had succeeded bandits or counterfeiters, who had been hung on the scene of their crime. The legend went that on winter nights, Satan came to lead his diabolical dances on the slope of the deep gorges in which the shadow of these ruins was engulfed.

But Master Zacharius was not dismayed by their sinister aspect. He reached the postern. No one forbade him to pass. A spacious and gloomy court presented itself to his eyes. He passed along the kind of inclined plane which conducted to one of the long corridors, the arches of which seemed to banish daylight from beneath their heavy springings. His advance was unresisted. Gerande, Aubert, and Scholastique closely followed him.

Master Zacharius, as if guided by an irresistible hand, seemed sure of his way, and strode along with rapid step. He reached an old worm-eaten door, which fell before his blows, while the bats described oblique circles around his head.

An immense hall, better preserved than the rest, was soon reached. High sculptured panels, on which larves, ghouls, and other strange figures seemed to agitate themselves confusedly, covered its walls. Several long and narrow windows shivered beneath the bursts of the tempest.

Master Zacharius, on reaching the middle of this hall, uttered a cry of joy. On an iron support, fastened to the wall, stood the clock in which now resided his entire life. This unequaled masterpiece represented an ancient Roman church, with its heavy bell-tower, where there was a complete chime for the anthem of the day, the "Angelus," the mass, and vespers. Above the church door, which opened at the hour of the ceremonies, was placed a "rose," in the center of which two hands moved, and the archivolt of which reproduced the twelve hours of the face sculptured in relief. Between the door and the rose, just as Scholastique had said, a maxim, relative to the employment of every moment of the day, appeared on a copper plate. Master Zacharius had regulated this succession of devices with a really Christian solicitude; the hours of prayer, of work, of repast, of recreation, and of repose followed each other according to the religious discipline,

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and were infallibly to insure salvation to him who scrupulously observed their commands.

Master Zacharius, intoxicated with joy, went forward to take possession of the clock, when a frightful roar of laughter resounded behind him. He turned, and by the light of a smoky lamp recognized the little old man of Geneva. "You here?" cried he.

Gerande was afraid. She drew closer to Aubert.

"Good day, Master Zacharius," said the monster.

"Who are you?"

"Signor Pittonaccio, at your service! You have come to give me your daughter! You have remembered my words,—'Gerande will not wed Aubert."

The young apprentice rushed upon Pittonaccio, who escaped from him like a shadow.

"Stop, Aubert!" cried Master Zacharius.

"Good night," said Pittonaccio; and he disappeared.

"My father, let us fly from this hateful place!" cried Gerande. "My father!"

Master Zacharius was no longer there. He was pursuing the phantom of Pittonaccio across the rickety corridors. Scholastique, Gerande, and Aubert remained, speechless and fainting, in the large gloomy hall. The young girl had fallen upon a stone seat; the old servant knelt beside her and prayed; Aubert remained erect watching his betrothed. Pale lights wandered in the darkness, and the silence was only broken by the movements of the little animals which range among old wood, and the noise of which marks the hours of "the clock of death."

When daylight came, they ventured upon the endless staircase which wound beneath these ruined masses; for two hours they wandered thus, without meeting a living soul, and hearing only a far-off echo responding to their cries. Sometimes they found themselves buried a hundred feet below the ground, and sometimes they reached places whence they could overlook the surrounding mountains.

Chance brought them at last back again to the vast hall, which had sheltered them during this night of anguish. It was no longer empty. Master Zacharius and Pittonaccio were talking there together, the one upright and rigid as a corpse, the other crouching over a marble table.

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Master Zacharius, when he perceived Gerande, went forward and took her by the hand, and led her towards Pittonaccio, saying, "Behold your lord and master, my daughter. Gerande, behold your husband!"

Gerande shuddered from head to foot.

"Never!" cried Aubert, "for she is my betrothed."

"Never!" responded Gerande, like a plaintive echo.

Pittonaccio began to laugh.

"You wish me to die, then?" exclaimed the old man. "There, in that clock, the last which goes of all which have gone from my hands, my life is shut up; and this man tells me, 'When I have thy daughter, this clock shall belong to thee.' And this man will not adjust it. He can break it, and plunge me into chaos. Ah, my daughter, you no longer love me!"

"My father!" murmured Gerande, recovering consciousness.

"If you knew what I have suffered, far away from this principle of my existence!" resumed the old man. "Perhaps its springs were left to wear out, its wheels to get clogged. But now, in my own hands, I can nourish this health so dear, for I must not die,—I, the great watchmaker of Geneva. Look, my daughter, how these hands advance with certain step. See, five o'clock is about to strike. Listen well, and look at the maxim which is about to be revealed."

Five o'clock struck with a noise which resounded sadly in Gerande's soul, and these words appeared in red letters:

"YOU MUST EAT OF THE FRUITS OF THE TREE OF SCIENCE."

Aubert and Gerande looked at each other stupefied. These were no longer the pious sayings of the Catholic watchmaker. The breath of Satan must have passed there. But Zacharius paid no attention to this, and resumed: "Dost thou hear, my Gerande? I live, I still live! Listen to my breathing,—see the blood circulating in my veins! No, thou wouldst not kill thy father, and thou wilt accept this man for thy husband, so that I may become immortal, and at last attain the power of God!"

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At these blasphemous words old Scholastique crossed herself, and Pittonaccio laughed aloud with joy.

"And then, Gerande, thou wilt be happy with him. See this man,—he is Time! Thy existence will be regulated with absolute precision. Gerande, since I gave thee life, give life to thy father!"

"Gerande," murmured Aubert, "I am thy betrothed."

"He is my father!" replied Gerande, fainting.

"She is thine!" said Master Zacharius. "Pittonaccio, thou wilt keep thy promise!"

"Here is the key of the clock," replied the horrible man.

Master Zacharius seized the long key, which resembled an uncoiled snake, and ran to the clock, which he hastened to wind up with fantastic rapidity. The creaking of the spring jarred upon the nerves. The old watchmaker wound and wound the key, without stopping a moment, and it seemed as if the movement were beyond his control. He wound more and more quickly, with strange contortions, until he fell from sheer weariness.

"There it is, wound up for a century!" he cried.

Aubert rushed from the hall as if he were mad. After long wandering, he found the outlet of the hateful château, and hastened into the open air. He returned to the hermitage of Notre-Dame, and talked so desperately to the holy recluse, that the latter consented to return with him to the château of Andermatt.

Master Zacharius had not left the hall. He ran every moment to listen to the regular beating of the old clock. Meanwhile the clock had struck, and to Scholastique's great terror, these words had appeared on the silver face:

"MAN OUGHT TO BECOME THE EQUAL OF GOD."

The old man had not only not been shocked by these impious maxims, but read them deliriously, and was pleased with these thoughts of pride, while Pittonaccio kept close by him.

The marriage-contract was to be signed at midnight. Gerande, almost unconscious, saw or heard nothing. The silence was only broken by the old man's words, and the chuckling of Pittonaccio.

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Eleven o'clock struck. Master Zacharius read in a loud voice:

"MAN SHOULD BE THE SLAVE OF SCIENCE, AND SACRIFICE TO IT RELATIVES AND FAMILY."

"Yes!" he cried, "there is nothing but science in this world!"

The hands slipped over the face of the clock with the hiss of a serpent, and the movement beat with accelerated strokes. Master Zacharius no longer spoke. He had fallen to the floor, he rattled, and from his oppressed bosom came only these half-broken words, "Life—science!"

The scene had now two new witnesses, the hermit and Aubert. Master Zacharius lay upon the floor; Gerande was praying beside him, more dead than alive. Of a sudden a dry, hard noise was heard, proceeding from the striking-apparatus.

Master Zacharius sprang up. "Midnight!" he cried.

The hermit stretched out his hand towards the old watchmaker,—and midnight did not sound.

Master Zacharius uttered a terrible cry, when these words appeared:

"WHOEVER SHALL ATTEMPT TO MAKE HIMSELF THE EQUAL OF GOD SHALL BE FOREVER DAMNED!"

The old clock burst with a noise like thunder, and the spring, escaping, leaped across the hall with a thousand fantastic contortions; the old man rose, ran after it, trying in vain to seize it, and exclaiming, "My soul,—my soul!"

The spring bounded before him, first on one side, then on the other, and he could not reach it.

At last Pittonaccio seized it, and, uttering a horrible blasphemy, ingulfed himself in the earth.

Master Zacharius fell over. He was dead.

The old watchmaker was buried in the midst of the peaks of Andermatt.

Then Aubert and Gerande returned to Geneva, and during the long life which God accorded to them, they imposed it on themselves to redeem by prayer the soul of the castaway of science.

THE END

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A Winter Amid the Ice

OR

The Cruise of the Jeune Hardie

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A Winter Amid the Ice

CHAPTER I

THE BLACK FLAG

THE curé of the ancient church of Dunkirk rose at five o'clock on the 12th of May, 18—, to perform, according to his custom, low mass for a few pious sinners.

Attired in his priestly robes, he was ready for the altar, when a man entered the sacristy, at once joyous and frightened. He was a sailor of some sixty years, but still vigorous and sturdy, with an open, honest countenance.

"Monsieur the curé," said he, "stop a moment, please."

"What do you want so early in the morning, Jean Cornbutte?" asked the curé.

"Want? Why, to embrace you in my arms, i' faith!"

"Well, after the mass at which you are going to be present——"

"The mass?" returned the old sailor, laughing. "Do you think you are going to say your mass now, and that I will let you do so?"

"And why should I not say my mass?" asked the curé. "Explain yourself. The third bell has sounded——"

"Whether it has or not," replied Jean Cornbutte, "it will sound many times to-day, monsieur, for you have promised me that you will bless, with your own hands, the marriage of my son Louis and my niece Marie!"

"He has arrived, then," said the curé joyfully.

"It is nearly the same thing," replied Cornbutte, rubbing his hands. "Our brig was signaled from the lookout at sunrise,—our brig, which you yourself christened by the good name of the *'Jeune-Hardie'!*"

"I congratulate you with all my heart, Cornbutte," said the curé. "I remember our agreement. The vicar will take my place, and I will put myself at your disposal against your dear son's arrival."

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"And I promise you that he will not make you fast long," replied the sailor. "You have published the banns, and you will only have to absolve him from the sins he may have committed between sky and water, in the Northern Ocean. It is a grand idea, the marriage celebrated the very day he arrives, and my son Louis shall leave his ship to go at once to the church."

"Go, then, and arrange everything, Cornbutte."

"I fly, monsieur the curé. Good-morning!"

The sailor hastened with rapid steps to his house, which stood on the quay, whence could be seen the Northern Ocean, of which he seemed so proud.

Jean Cornbutte had amassed a comfortable sum at his calling. After having long commanded the vessels of a rich ship-owner of Havre, he had settled down in his native town, where he had caused the brig *Jeune-Hardie* to be constructed at his own expense. Several successful voyages had been made in the North, and the ship always found a good sale for its cargoes of wood, iron, and tar. Jean Cornbutte then gave up the command of her to his son Louis, a fine sailor of thirty, who, according to all the coasting captains, was the boldest mariner in Dunkirk.

Louis Cornbutte had gone away deeply attached to Marie, his father's niece, who found the time of his absence very long and weary. Marie was scarcely twenty. She was a pretty Flemish girl, with some Dutch blood in her veins. Her mother, when she was dying, had confided her to her brother, Jean Cornbutte. The brave old sailor loved her as a daughter, and saw in her proposed union with Louis a source of real and durable happiness.

The arrival of the ship, already signaled off the coast, completed an important business operation, from which Jean Cornbutte expected large profits. The *Jeune-Hardie,* which had left three months before, came last from Bodoë, on the west coast of Norway, and had made a quick voyage thence.

On returning home, Jean Cornbutte found the whole house alive. Marie, with radiant face, had assumed her wedding-dress. "I hope the ship will not arrive before we are ready!" she said.

"Hurry, little one," replied Jean Cornbutte, "for the wind is north, and she sails well, you know."

"Have our friends been told, uncle?" asked Marie.

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"They have."

"The notary, and the curé?"

"Rest easy. You alone are keeping us waiting."

At this moment Clerbaut, an old crony, came in. "Well, old Cornbutte," cried he, "here's luck! Your ship has arrived at the very moment that the government has decided to contract for a large quantity of wood for the navy!"

"What is that to me?" replied Jean Cornbutte. "What care I for the government?"

"You see, Monsieur Clerbaut," said Marie, "one thing only absorbs us,—Louis's return."

"I don't dispute that," replied Clerbaut. "But—in short—this purchase of wood——"

"And you shall be at the wedding," replied Jean Cornbutte, interrupting the merchant, and shaking his hand as if he would crush it.

"This purchase of wood——"

"And with all our friends, landsmen and seamen, Clerbaut. I have already informed everybody, and I shall invite the whole crew of the ship."

"And shall we go and await them on the pier?" asked Marie.

"Indeed we will," replied Jean Cornbutte. "We will defile, two by two, with the violins at the head."

Jean Cornbutte's invited guests soon arrived. Though it was very early, not a single one failed to appear. All congratulated the honest old sailor whom they loved. Meanwhile Marie, kneeling down, changed her prayers to God into thanksgivings. She soon returned, lovely and decked out, to the company; all the women kissed her, while the men vigorously grasped her by the hand.

It was a curious sight to see this joyous group taking its way, at sunrise, towards the sea. The news of the ship's arrival had spread through the port, and many heads, in nightcaps, appeared at windows and half-opened doors. Compliments and pleasant nods came from every side.

The party reached the pier in the midst of a concert of praise and blessings. The weather was magnificent, and the sun seemed to take part in the festivity. A fresh north wind made the waves foam; and some fishing-smacks, their sails trimmed for leaving port, streaked the sea with their rapid wakes between the breakwaters.

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The two piers of Dunkirk stretch far out into the sea. The wedding-party occupied the whole width of the northern pier, and soon reached a small house situated at its extremity, inhabited by the harbor-master. The wind freshened, and the *Jeune-Hardie* ran swiftly under her topsails, mizzen, brigantine, gallant, and royal. Jean Cornbutte, spy-glass in hand, responded merrily to the questions of his friends.

"See my ship!" he cried; "clean and steady as if she had been rigged at Dunkirk! Not a bit of damage done, —not a rope wanting!"

"Do you see your son, the captain?" asked one.

"No, not yet. Why, he's at his business!"

"Why doesn't he run up his flag?" asked Clerbaut.

"I scarcely know. He has a reason for it, I have no doubt."

"Your spy-glass, uncle?" said Marie, taking it from him. "I want to be the first to see him."

"But he is my son, mademoiselle!"

"He has been your son for thirty years," answered the young girl, laughing, "and he has only been my betrothed for two!"

The *Jeune-Hardie* was now entirely visible. Already the crew were preparing to cast anchor. The upper sails had been reefed. The sailors who were among the rigging might be recognized. But neither Marie nor Jean Cornbutte had yet been able to wave their hands at the captain of the ship.

"There's the mate, André Vasling," cried Clerbaut.

"There's Fidèle, the carpenter," said another.

"And our friend Penellan," said a third, saluting the sailor named.

The *Jeune-Hardie* was only three cables' lengths from the shore, when a black flag ascended to the gaff of the brigantine. There was mourning on board the boat. A shudder of terror seized the party and the heart of the young girl.

The ship sadly swayed into port, and an icy silence reigned on its deck. Soon it had passed the end of the pier. Marie, Jean Cornbutte, and all their friends hurried towards the quay at which she was to anchor, and in a moment found themselves on board.

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"My son!" said Jean Cornbutte.

The sailors, with uncovered heads, pointed to the mourning flag. Marie uttered a cry of anguish, and fell into old Cornbutte's arms.

André Vasling had brought back the *Jeune-Hardie,* but Louis Cornbutte, Marie's betrothed, was not on board.

CHAPTER II

JEAN CORNBUTTE'S PROJECT

As soon as the young girl, confided to the care of the sympathizing friends, had left the ship, André Vasling, the mate, apprised Jean Cornbutte of the dreadful event which had deprived him of his son, narrated in the ship's journal as follows:—

"Near the Maëlstrom, on the 26th of April, bad weather and south-west winds. Perceived signals of distress made by a schooner to the leeward. This schooner, deprived of its mizzen-mast, was running towards the whirlpool, under bare poles. Captain Louis Cornbutte, seeing that this vessel was hastening into danger, resolved to board her. Despite the remonstrances of his crew, he had the long-boat lowered into the sea, and got into it, with the sailor Courtois and the helmsman Pierre Nouquet The crew watched them until they disappeared in the fog. Night came on. The sea became more and more boisterous. The *Jeune-Hardie* was in danger of being engulfed by the Maëlstrom. She was obliged to fly before the wind. For several days she hovered near the place of the disaster. The long-boat, the schooner, Captain Louis, and the two sailors did not reappear. André Vasling then called the crew together, took command of the ship, and set sail for Dunkirk."

After reading this dry narrative, Jean Cornbutte wept for a long time; if he had any consolation, it was that his son had died in attempting to save his fellow-men. Then the poor father left the ship, the sight of which made him wretched, and returned to his desolate home.

The sad news soon spread throughout Dunkirk. The many friends of the old sailor came to bring him their sincere sympathy. Then the sailors of the *Jeune-Hardie* gave a more particular account of the event, and André Vasling

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told Marie, at great length, of the devotion of her betrothed to the last.

When he ceased weeping, Jean Cornbutte, the next day after the ship's arrival, said, "Are you very sure, André, that my son has perished?"

"Alas, yes, Monsieur Jean," replied the mate.

"And you made all possible search for him?"

"All, Monsieur Cornbutte. But it is unhappily but too certain that he and the two sailors were sucked down in the whirlpool of the Maëlstrom."

"Would you like, André, to keep the second command of the ship?"

"That will depend upon the captain, Monsieur Jean."

"I shall be the captain," replied the old sailor. "I am going to discharge the cargo with all speed, make up my crew, and sail in search of my son."

"Your son is dead!" said André obstinately.

"It is possible, André," replied Jean Cornbutte sharply, "but it is also possible that he saved himself. I am going to rummage all the ports of Norway, and when I am fully convinced that I shall never see him again, I will return here to die!"

André Vasling, seeing that this decision was irrevocable, did not insist further, but went away.

Jean Cornbutte at once told his niece of his intention, and he saw a few rays of hope glisten across her tears. It had not seemed to the young girl that her lover's death could be doubtful; but when this new hope entered her heart, she embraced it without reserve.

The old sailor determined that the *Jeune-Hardie* should put to sea without delay. The solidly built ship had no need of repairs. Jean Cornbutte gave his sailors notice that if they wished to re-embark, no change in the crew would be made. He alone replaced his son in the command of the brig. None of the comrades of Louis Cornbutte failed to respond to his call, and there were hardy tars among them,—Alaine Turquiette, Fidèle Misonne, the carpenter, Penellan the Breton, who replaced Pierre Nouquet as helmsman, and Gradlin, Aupic, and Gervique, courageous and well-tried mariners.

Jean again offered André Vasling his old rank on board. The first mate was an able officer, who had

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proved his skill in bringing the *Jeune-Hardie* into port. Yet, from what motive could not be told, André made some difficulties and asked time for reflection.

"As you will, André," replied Cornbutte. "Only remember that if you accept, you will be welcome."

Jean had a devoted sailor in Penellan the Breton, who had long been his fellow-voyager. In times gone by, little Marie was wont to pass the long winter evenings in the helmsman's arms, when he was on shore. He felt a fatherly friendship for her, and she had for him an affection quite filial. Penellan hastened the fitting out of the ship with all his energy, all the more because, according to his opinion, André Vasling had not perhaps made every effort possible to find the castaways, although he was excusable from the responsibility which weighed upon him as captain.

Within a week the *Jeune-Hardie* was ready to put to sea. Instead of merchandise, she was completely provided with salt meats, biscuits, barrels of flour, potatoes, pork, wine, brandy, coffee, tea, and tobacco.

The departure was fixed for the 22nd of May. On the evening before, André Vasling, who had not yet given his answer to Jean Cornbutte, came to his house. He was still undecided, and did not know which course to take.

Jean was not at home, though the house door was open. André went into the passage, next to Marie's chamber, where the sound of an animated conversation struck his ear. He listened attentively, and recognized the voices of Penellan and Marie.

The discussion had no doubt been going on for some time, for the young girl seemed to be stoutly opposing what the Breton sailor said.

"How old is my uncle Cornbutte?" said Marie.

"Something about sixty years," replied Penellan.

"Well, is he not going to brave danger to find his son?"

"Our captain is still a sturdy man," returned the sailor. "He has a body of oak and muscles as hard as a spare spar. So I am not afraid to have him go to sea again!"

"My good Penellan," said Marie, "one is strong when one loves! Besides, I have full confidence in the aid of Heaven. You understand me, and will help me."

"No!" said Penellan. "It is impossible, Marie. Who knows whither we shall drift, or what we must suffer? How

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many vigorous men have I seen lose their lives in these seas!"

"Penellan," returned the young girl, "if you refuse me, I shall believe that you do not love me any longer."

André Vasling guessed the young girl's resolution. He reflected a moment, and his course was determined on.

"Jean Cornbutte," said he, advancing towards the old sailor, who now entered, "I will go with you. The cause of my hesitation has disappeared, and you may count upon my devotion."

"I have never doubted you, André Vasling," replied Jean Cornbutte, grasping him by the hand. "Marie, my child!" he added, calling in a loud voice.

Marie and Penellan made their appearance.

"We shall set sail to-morrow at daybreak, with the outgoing tide," said Jean. "My poor Marie, this is the last evening that we shall pass together."

"Uncle!" cried Marie, throwing herself into his arms.

"Marie, by the help of God, I will bring your lover back."

"Yes, we will find Louis," added André Vasling.

"You are going with us, then?" asked Penellan quickly.

"Yes, Penellan, André Vasling is to be my first mate," answered Jean.

"Oh, oh!" ejaculated the Breton, in a singular tone.

"His advice will be useful, for he is able and enterprising."

"And yourself, captain," said André. "You will set us all a good example, for you have still as much vigor as experience."

"Well, my friends, good-by till to-morrow. Go on board and make the final arrangements. Good-by, André; good-by, Penellan."

The mate and the sailor went out together, and Jean and Marie remained alone. Many bitter tears were shed during that sad evening. Jean Cornbutte, seeing Marie so wretched, resolved to spare her the pain of separation by leaving the house on the morrow without her knowledge. So he gave her a last kiss that evening, and at three o'clock next morning was up and away.

The departure of the brig had attracted all the old sailor's friends to the pier. The curé, who was to have blessed Marie's union with Louis, came to give a last benediction

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on the ship. Rough grasps of the hand were silently exchanged, and Jean went on board.

The crew were all there. André Vasling gave the last orders. The sails were spread, and the brig rapidly passed out under a stiff northwest breeze, whilst the curé, upright in the midst of the kneeling spectators, committed the vessel to the hands of God. "Whither goes this ship? She follows the perilous route upon which so many castaways have been lost! She has no certain destination. She must expect every peril, and be able to brave them without hesitating. God alone knows where it will be her fate to anchor. May God guide her!"

CHAPTER III

A RAY OF HOPE

At that time of the year the season was favorable, and the crew might hope promptly to reach the scene of the shipwreck.

Jean Cornbutte's plan was naturally traced out. He counted on stopping at the Faroë Islands, whither the north wind might have carried the castaways; then, if he was convinced that they had not been received in any of the ports of that locality, he would continue his search beyond the Northern Ocean, ransack the whole western coast of Norway as far as Bodoë, the place nearest the scene of the shipwreck; and, if necessary, farther still.

André Vasling thought, contrary to the captain's opinion, that the coast of Iceland should be explored; but Penellan observed that, at the time of the catastrophe, the gale came from the west; which, while it gave hope that the unfortunates had not been forced towards the gulf of the Maëlstrom, gave ground for supposing that they might have been thrown on the Norwegian coast.

It was determined, then, that this coast should be followed as closely as possible, so as to recognize any traces of them that might appear.

The day after sailing, Jean Cornbutte, intent upon a map, was absorbed in reflection, when a small hand touched his shoulder, and a soft voice said in his ear, "Have good courage, uncle."

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He turned, and was stupefied. Marie embraced him.

"Marie, my daughter, on board!" he cried.

"The wife may well go in search of her husband, when the father embarks to save his child."

"Unhappy Marie! How wilt thou support our fatigues! Dost know thy presence may retard our search?"

"No, uncle, for I am strong."

"Who knows whither we shall be forced to go, Marie? Look at this map. We are approaching places dangerous even for us sailors, hardened though we are to the difficulties of the sea. And thou, frail child?"

"But, uncle, I come from a family of sailors. I am used to stories of combats and tempests. I am with you and my old friend Penellan!"

"Penellan! It was he who concealed you on board?"

"Yes, uncle; but only when he saw that I was determined to come without his help."

"Penellan!" cried Jean. Penellan entered.

"It is not possible to undo what you have done, Penellan; but remember that you are responsible for Marie's life."

"Rest easy, captain," replied Penellan. "The little one has force and courage, and will be our guardian angel. And then, captain, you know it is my theory, that all in this world happens for the best."

The young girl was installed in a cabin, which the sailors soon got ready for her, and which they made as comfortable as possible.

A week later the *Jeune-Hardie* stopped at the Faroë Islands, but the most minute search was fruitless. No wreck, or fragments of a ship had come upon these coasts. The brig resumed its voyage, after a stay of ten days, about the 10th of June. The sea was calm, and the winds were favorable. The ship sped rapidly towards the Norwegian coast, which it explored without better result.

Jean Cornbutte determined to proceed to Bodoë. Perhaps he would there learn the name of the shipwrecked schooner to succor which Louis and the sailors had sacrificed themselves.

On the 30th of June the brig cast anchor in that port.

The authorities of Bodoë gave Jean Cornbutte a bottle found on the coast, which contained a document bearing these words: "This 26th April, on board the *Froöern*, after

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being accosted by the long-boat of the *Jeune-Hardie,* we were drawn by the currents towards the ice. God have pity on us!"

Jean Cornbutte's first impulse was to thank Heaven. He thought himself on his son's track. The *Froöern* was a Norwegian sloop of which there had been no news, but which had evidently been drawn northward.

Not a day was to be lost. The *Jeune-Hardie* was at once put in condition to brave the perils of the polar seas. Fidèle Misonne, the carpenter, carefully examined her, and assured himself that her solid construction might resist the shock of the ice-masses.

Penellan, who had already engaged in whale-fishing in the arctic waters, took care that woolen and fur coverings, many sealskin moccasins, and wood for the making of sledges with which to cross the ice-fields were put on board. The amount of provisions was increased, and spirits and charcoal were added; for it might be that they would have to winter at some point on the Greenland coast. They also procured, with much difficulty and at a high price, a quantity of lemons, for preventing or curing the scurvy, that terrible disease which decimates crews in the icy regions. The ship's hold was filled with salt meat, biscuits, brandy, etc., as the steward's room no longer sufficed. They provided themselves, also, with a large quantity of "pemmican," an Indian preparation which concentrates much nutrition within a small volume.

By order of the captain, some saws were put on board for cutting the ice-fields, as well as picks and wedges for separating them. The captain determined to procure some dogs to be used for drawing the sledges on the Greenland coast.

The whole crew was engaged in these preparations, and displayed great activity. The sailors Aupic, Gervique, and Gradlin zealously obeyed Penellan's orders; and he admonished them not to accustom themselves to woolen garments, though the temperature in this latitude, situated just beyond the polar circle, was very low.

Penellan, though he said nothing, narrowly watched every action of André Vasling. This man was Dutch by birth, came from no one knew whither, but was at least a good sailor, having made two voyages on board the *Jeune-Hardie.*

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Penellan would not as yet accuse him of anything, unless it was that he kept near Marie too constantly, but he did not let him out of his sight.

Thanks to the energy of the crew, the brig was equipped by the 16th of July, a fortnight after its arrival at Bodoë. It was then the favorable season for attempting explorations in the Arctic Seas. The thaw had been going on for two months, and the search might be carried farther north. The *Jeune-Hardie* set sail, and directed her way towards Cape Brewster, on the eastern coast of Greenland, near the 70th degree of latitude.

CHAPTER IV
IN THE PASSES

About the 23rd of July a reflection, raised above the sea, announced the presence of the first icebergs, which, emerging from Davis's Straits, advanced into the ocean. From this moment a vigilant watch was ordered to the look-out men, for it was important not to come into collision with these enormous masses.

The crew was divided into two watches. The first was composed of Fidèle Misonne, Gradlin, and Gervique; and the second of André Vasling, Aupic, and Penellan. These watches were to last only two hours, for in those cold regions a man's strength is diminished one-half. Though the *Jeune-Hardie* was not yet beyond the 63rd degree of latitude, the thermometer already stood at nine degrees centigrade below zero.

Rain and snow often fell abundantly. On fair days, when the wind was not too violent, Marie remained on deck, and her eyes became accustomed to the uncouth scenes of the Polar Seas.

On the 1st of August she was talking with her uncle, Penellan, and André Vasling. The ship was then entering a channel three miles wide, across which broken masses of ice were rapidly descending southwards.

"When shall we see land?" asked the young girl.

"In four days at the latest," replied Jean Cornbutte.

"But shall we find there fresh traces of Louis?"

"Perhaps so, my daughter; but I fear that we are still

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far from the end of our voyage. It is to be feared that the *Froöern* was driven farther northward."

"That may be," added André Vasling, "for the squall which separated us from the Norwegian coast lasted three days, and in three days a ship makes good headway when it is no longer able to resist the wind."

"Permit me to tell you, Monsieur Vasling," replied Penellan, "that that was in April, that the thaw had not then begun, and that therefore the *Froöern* must have been soon arrested by the ice."

"And no doubt dashed into a thousand pieces," said the mate, "as her crew could not manage her."

"But these ice-fields," returned Penellan, "gave her an easy means of reaching land, from which she could not have been far distant."

"Let us hope so," said Jean Cornbutte, interrupting the discussion which was daily renewed between the mate and the helmsman. "I think we shall see land before long."

"There it is!" cried Marie. "See those mountains!"

"No, my child," replied her uncle. "Those are mountains of ice, the first we have met with. They would shatter us like glass if we got entangled between them. Penellan and Vasling, overlook the men."

These floating masses, more than fifty of which now appeared at the horizon, came nearer and nearer to the brig. Penellan took the helm, and Jean Cornbutte, mounted on the gallant, indicated the route to take.

Towards evening the brig was entirely surrounded by these moving rocks, the crushing force of which is irresistible. It was necessary, then, to cross this fleet of mountains, for prudence prompted them to keep straight ahead. Another difficulty was added to these perils. The direction of the ship could not be accurately determined, as all the surrounding points constantly changed position, and thus failed to afford a fixed perspective. The darkness soon increased with the fog. Marie descended to her cabin, and the whole crew, by the captain's orders, remained on deck. They were armed with long boat-poles, with iron spikes, to preserve the ship from collision with the ice.

The ship soon entered a strait so narrow that often the ends of her yards were grazed by the drifting mountains, and her booms seemed about to be driven in. They were

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even forced to trim the mainyard so as to touch the shrouds. Happily these precautions did not deprive the vessel of any of its speed, for the wind could only reach the upper sails, and these sufficed to carry her forward rapidly. Thanks to her slender hull, she passed through these valleys, which were filled with whirlpools of rain, whilst the icebergs crushed against each other with sharp cracking and splitting.

Jean Cornbutte returned to the deck. His eyes could not penetrate the surrounding darkness. It became necessary to furl the upper sails, for the ship threatened to ground, and if she did so she was lost.

"Cursed voyage!" growled André Vasling among the sailors, who, forward, were avoiding the most menacing ice-blocks with their boat-hooks.

"Truly, if we escape we shall owe a fine candle to Our Lady of the Ice!" replied Aupic.

"Who knows how many floating mountains we have got to pass through yet?" added the mate.

"And who can guess what we shall find beyond them?" replied the sailor.

"Don't talk so much, prattler," said Gervique, "and look out on your side. When we have got by them, it'll be time to grumble. Look out for your boat-hook!"

At this moment an enormous block of ice, in the narrow strait through which the brig was passing, came rapidly down upon her, and it seemed impossible to avoid it, for it barred the whole width of the channel, and the brig could not heave-to.

"Do you feel the tiller?" asked Cornbutte of Penellan.

"No, captain. The ship does not answer the helm."

"*Ohé,* boys!" cried the captain to the crew; "don't be afraid, brace your hooks against the gunwale."

The block was nearly sixty feet high, and if it threw itself upon the brig she would be crushed. There was an undefinable moment of suspense, and the crew retreated backward, abandoning their posts despite the captain's orders.

But at the instant when the block was not more than half a cable's length from the *Jeune-Hardie,* a dull sound was heard, and a veritable waterspout fell upon the bow of the vessel, which then rose on the back of an enormous billow.

The sailors uttered a cry of terror; but when they looked before them the block had disappeared, the passage was

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free, and beyond an immense plain of water, illumined by the rays of the declining sun, assured them of an easy navigation.

"All's well!" cried Penellan. "Let's trim our topsails and mizzen!"

An incident very common in those parts had just occurred. When these masses are detached from one another in the thawing season, they float in a perfect equilibrium; but on reaching the ocean, where the water is relatively warmer, they are speedily undermined at the base, which melts little by little, and which is also shaken by the shock of other ice-masses. A moment comes when the center of gravity of these masses is displaced, and then they are completely overturned. Only, if this block had turned over two minutes later, it would have fallen on the brig and carried her down in its fall.

CHAPTER V
LIVERPOOL ISLAND

On the 3rd of August the brig confronted immovable and united ice-masses. The passages were seldom more than a cable's length in width, and the ship was forced to make many turnings, which sometimes placed her heading the wind.

Penellan watched over Marie with paternal care, and, despite the cold, prevailed upon her to spend two or three hours every day on deck, for exercise had become one of the indispensable conditions of health.

Marie's courage did not falter. She even comforted the sailors with her cheerful talk, and all of them became warmly attached to her. André Vasling showed himself more attentive than ever, and seized every occasion to be in her company; but the young girl, with a sort of presentiment, accepted his services with some coldness. It may be easily conjectured that André's conversation referred more to the future than to the present, and that he did not conceal the slight probability there was of saving the castaways. He was convinced that they were lost, and the young girl ought thenceforth to confide her existence to someone else.

Marie had not as yet comprehended André's designs, for,

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to his great disgust, he could never find an opportunity to talk long with her alone. Penellan had always an excuse for interfering, and destroying the effect of André's words by the hopeful opinions he expressed.

Marie, meanwhile, did not remain idle. Acting on the helmsman's advice, she set to work on her winter garments; for it was necessary that she should completely change her clothing. The cut of her dresses was not suitable for these cold latitudes. She made, therefore, a sort of furred pantaloons, the ends of which were lined with seal-skin; and her narrow skirts came only to her knees, so as not to be in contact with the layers of snow with which the winter would cover the ice-fields. A fur mantle, fitting closely to the figure and supplied with a hood, protected the upper part of her body.

In the intervals of their work, the sailors, too, prepared clothing with which to shelter themselves from the cold. They made a quantity of high seal-skin boots, with which to cross the snow during their explorations. They worked thus all the time that the navigation in the straits lasted.

André Vasling, who was an excellent shot, several times brought down aquatic birds with his gun; innumerable flocks of these were always careering about the ship. A kind of eider-duck provided the crew with very palatable food, which relieved the monotony of the salt meat.

At last the brig came in sight of Cape Brewster. A long-boat was put to sea. Jean Cornbutte and Penellan reached the coast, which was entirely deserted.

The ship at once directed its course towards Liverpool Island, discovered in 1821 by Captain Scoresby, and the crew gave a hearty cheer when they saw the natives running along the shore. Communication was speedily established with them, thanks to Penellan's knowledge of a few words of their language, and some phrases which the natives themselves had learnt of the whalers who frequented those parts.

These Greenlanders were small and squat; they were not more than four feet ten inches high; they had red, round faces, and low foreheads; their hair, flat and black, fell over their shoulders; their teeth were decayed, and they seemed to be affected by the sort of leprosy which is peculiar to ichthyophagous tribes.

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In exchange for pieces of iron and brass, of which they are extremely covetous, these poor creatures brought bear furs, the skins of sea-calves, sea-dogs, sea-wolves, and all the animals generally known as seals. Jean Cornbutte obtained these at a low price, and they were certain to become most useful.

The captain then made the natives understand that he was in search of a shipwrecked vessel, and asked them if they had heard of it. One of them immediately drew something like a ship on the snow, and indicated that a vessel of that sort had been carried northward three months before: he also managed to make it understood that the thaw and breaking up of the ice-fields had prevented the Greenlanders from going in search of it; and, indeed, their very light canoes, which they managed with paddles, could not go to sea at that time.

This news, though meager, restored hope to the hearts of the sailors, and Jean Cornbutte had no difficulty in persuading them to advance farther in the polar seas.

Before quitting Liverpool Island, the captain purchased a pack of six Esquimaux dogs, which were soon acclimatized on board. The ship weighed anchor on the morning of the 10th of August, and sailed north under a brisk wind.

The longest days of the year had now arrived; that is, the sun, in these high latitudes, did not set, and reached the highest point of the spirals which it described above the horizon. This total absence of night was not, however, very apparent, for the fog, rain, and snow sometimes enveloped the ship in real darkness.

Jean Cornbutte, who was resolved to advance as far as possible, began to take measures of health. The space between decks was securely enclosed, and every morning care was taken to ventilate it with fresh air. The stoves were installed, and the pipes so disposed as to yield as much heat as possible. The sailors were advised to wear only one woolen shirt over their cotton shirts, and to hermetically close their seal cloaks. The fires were not yet lighted, for it was important to reserve the wood and charcoal for the most intense cold. Warm beverages, such as coffee and tea, were regularly distributed to the sailors morning and evening; and as it was important to live on meat, they shot ducks and teal, which abounded in these parts.

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Jean Cornbutte also placed at the summit of the mainmast a "crow's nest," a sort of cask open at one end, in which a look-out remained constantly, to observe the ice-fields.

Two days after the brig had lost sight of Liverpool Island the temperature became suddenly colder under the influence of a dry wind. Some indications of winter were perceived. The ship had not a moment to lose, for soon the way would be entirely closed to her. She advanced across the straits, among which lay ice-plains thirty feet thick.

On the morning of the 3rd of September the *Jeune-Hardie* reached the head of Gaël-Hamkes Bay. Land was then thirty miles to the leeward. It was the first time that the brig had stopped before a mass of ice which offered no outlet, and which was at least a mile wide. The saws must now be used to cut the ice. Penellan, Aupic, Gradlin, and Turquiette were chosen to work the saws, which had been carried outside the ship. The direction of the cutting was so determined that the current might carry off the pieces detached from the mass. The whole crew worked at this task for nearly twenty hours. They found it very painful to remain on the ice, and were often obliged to plunge into the water up to their middle; their seal-skin garments protected them but imperfectly from the damp.

Moreover, all excessive toil in those high latitudes is soon followed by an overwhelming weariness; for the breath soon fails, and the strongest are forced to rest at frequent intervals. At last the navigation became free, and the brig was towed beyond the mass which had so long obstructed her course.

CHAPTER VI

THE QUAKING OF THE ICE

For several days the *Jeune-Hardie* struggled against formidable obstacles. The crew were almost all the time at work with the saws, and often powder was used to blow up the enormous blocks of ice which closed the way.

On the 12th of September the sea consisted of one solid plain, without outlet or passage, surrounding the vessel on all sides, so that she could neither advance nor retreat. The temperature remained at an average of sixteen degrees be-

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low zero. The winter season had come on, with its sufferings and dangers. The *Jeune-Hardie* was at this time near the 21st degree of longitude west and the 76th degree of latitude north, at the entrance of Gaêl-Hamkes Bay.

Jean Cornbutte made his preliminary preparations for wintering. He first searched for a creek whose position would shelter the ship from the wind and breaking up of the ice. Land, which was probably thirty miles west, could alone offer him secure shelter, and he resolved to attempt to reach it.

He set out on the 12th of September, accompanied by André Vasling, Penellan, and the two sailors Gradlin and Turquiette. Each man carried provisions for two days, for it was not likely that their expedition would occupy a longer time, and they were supplied with skins on which to sleep.

Snow had fallen in great abundance and was not yet frozen over; and this delayed them seriously. They often sank to their waists, and could only advance very cautiously, for fear of falling into crevices. Penellan, who walked in front, carefully sounded each depression with his iron-pointed staff.

About five in the evening the fog began to thicken, and the little band were forced to stop. Penellan looked about for an iceberg which might shelter them from the wind, and after refreshing themselves, with regrets that they had no warm drink, they spread their skins on the snow, wrapped themselves up, lay close to each other, and soon dropped asleep from sheer fatigue.

The next morning Jean Cornbutte and his companions were buried beneath a bed of snow more than a foot deep. Happily their skins, perfectly impermeable, had preserved them, and the snow itself had aided in retaining their heat, which it prevented from escaping.

The captain gave the signal of departure, and about noon they at last descried the coast, which at first they could scarcely distinguish. High ledges of ice, cut perpendicularly, rose on the shore; their variegated summits, of all forms and shapes, reproduced on a large scale the phenomena of crystallization. Myriads of aquatic fowl flew about at the approach of the party, and the seals, lazily lying on the ice, plunged hurriedly into the depths.

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"I' faith!" said Penellan, "we shall not want for either furs or game!"

"Those animals," returned Cornbutte, "give every evidence of having been already visited by men; for in places totally uninhabited they would not be so wild."

"None but Greenlanders frequent these parts," said André Vasling.

"I see no trace of their passage, however; neither any encampment nor the smallest hut," said Penellan, who had climbed up a high peak. "O captain!" he continued, "come here! I see a point of land which will shelter us splendidly from the northeast wind."

"Come along, boys!" said Jean Cornbutte.

His companions followed him, and they soon rejoined Penellan. The sailor had said what was true. An elevated point of land jutted out like a promontory, and curving towards the coast, formed a little inlet of a mile in width at most. Some moving ice-blocks, broken by this point, floated in the midst, and the sea, sheltered from the colder winds, was not yet entirely frozen over.

This was an excellent spot for wintering, and it only remained to get the ship thither. Jean Cornbutte remarked that the neighboring ice-field was very thick, and it seemed very difficult to cut a canal to bring the brig to its destination. Some other creek, then, must be found; it was in vain that he explored northward. The coast remained steep and abrupt for a long distance, and beyond the point it was directly exposed to the attacks of the east wind. The circumstance disconcerted the captain all the more because André Vasling used strong arguments to show how bad the situation was. Penellan, in his dilemma, found it difficult to convince himself that all was for the best.

But one chance remained—to seek a shelter on the southern side of the coast. This was to return on their path, but hesitation was useless. The little band returned rapidly in the direction of the ship, as their provisions had begun to run short. Jean Cornbutte searched for some practicable passage, or at least some fissure by which a canal might be cut across the ice-fields, all along the route, but in vain.

Towards evening the sailors came to the same place where they had encamped over night. There had been no snow during the day, and they could recognize the imprint of their

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bodies on the ice. They again disposed themselves to sleep with their furs.

Penellan, much disturbed by the bad success of the expedition, was sleeping restlessly, when, at a waking moment, his attention was attracted by a dull rumbling. He listened attentively, and the rumbling seemed so strange that he nudged Jean Cornbutte with his elbow.

"What is that?" said the latter, whose mind, according to a sailor's habit, was awake as soon as his body.

"Listen, captain."

The noise increased, with perceptible violence.

"It cannot be thunder, in so high a latitude," said Cornbutte, rising.

"I think we have come across some white bears," replied Penellan.

"The devil! We have not seen any yet."

"Sooner or later, we must have expected a visit from them. Let us give them a good reception."

Penellan, armed with a gun, lightly crossed the ledge which sheltered them. The darkness was very dense; he could discover nothing; but a new incident soon showed him that the cause of the noise did not proceed from around them.

Jean Cornbutte rejoined him, and they observed with terror that this rumbling, which awakened their companions, came from beneath them.

A new kind of peril menaced them. To the noise, which resembled peals of thunder, was added a distinct undulating motion of the ice-field. Several of the party lost their balance and fell.

"Attention!" cried Penellan.

"Yes!" someone responded.

"Turquiette! Gradlin! where are you?"

"Here I am!" responded Turquiette, shaking off the snow with which he was covered.

"This way, Vasling," cried Cornbutte to the mate. "And Gradlin?"

"Present, captain."

"But we are lost!" shouted Gradlin, in fright.

"No!" said Penellan. "Perhaps we are saved!"

Hardly had he uttered these words when a frightful cracking noise was heard. The ice-field broke clear through,

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and the sailors were forced to cling to the block which was quivering just by them. Despite the helmsman's words, they found themselves in a most perilous position, for an ice-quake had occurred. The ice masses had just "weighed anchor," as the sailors say. The movement lasted nearly two minutes, and it was to be feared that the crevice would yawn at the very feet of the unhappy sailors. They anxiously awaited daylight in the midst of continuous shocks, for they could not, without risk of death, move a step, and had to remain stretched out at full length to avoid being engulfed.

As soon as it was daylight a very different aspect presented itself to their eyes. The vast plain, a compact mass the evening before, was now separated in a thousand places, and the waves, raised by some submarine commotion, had broken the thick layer which sheltered them.

The thought of his ship occurred to Cornbutte's mind.

"My poor brig!" he cried. "It must have perished!"

The deepest despair began to overcast the faces of his companions. The loss of the ship inevitably preceded their own deaths.

"Courage, friends," said Penellan. "Reflect that this night's disaster has opened us a path across the ice, which will enable us to bring our ship to the bay for wintering! and, stop! I am not mistaken. There is the *Jeune-Hardie,* a mile nearer to us!"

All hurried forward, and so imprudently, that Turquiette slipped into a fissure, and would have certainly perished, had not Jean Cornbutte seized him by his hood. He got off with a rather cold bath.

The brig was indeed floating two miles away. After infinite trouble, the little band reached her. She was in good condition; but her rudder, which they had neglected to lift, had been broken by the ice.

CHAPTER VII

SETTLING FOR THE WINTER

PENELLAN was once more right; all was for the best, and this ice-quake had opened a practicable channel for the ship to the bay. The sailors had only to make skillful use of the currents to conduct her thither.

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On the 19th of September the brig was at last moored in her bay for wintering, two cables' lengths from the shore, securely anchored on a good bottom. The ice began the next day to form around her hull; it soon became strong enough to bear a man's weight, and they could establish a communication with land.

The rigging, as is customary in arctic navigation, remained as it was; the sails were carefully furled on the yards and covered with their casings, and the "crow's-nest" remained in place, as much to enable them to make distant observations as to attract attention to the ship.

The sun now scarcely rose above the horizon. Since the June solstice, the spirals which it had described descended lower and lower; and it would very soon disappear altogether.

The crew hastened to make the necessary preparations. Penellan supervised the whole. The ice was soon thick around the ship, and it was to be feared that its pressure might become dangerous; but Penellan waited until, by reason of the going and coming of the floating ice-masses and their adherence, it had reached a thickness of twenty feet; he then had it cut around the hull, so that it united under the ship, the form of which it assumed; thus enclosed in a mould, the brig had no longer to fear the pressure of the ice, which could make no movement.

The sailors then elevated along the wales to the height of the nettings, a snow wall five or six feet thick, which soon froze as hard as a rock. This envelope did not allow the interior heat to escape outside. A canvas tent, covered with skins and hermetically closed, was stretched over the whole length of the deck, and formed a sort of walk for the sailors.

They also constructed on the ice a storehouse of snow, in which articles which embarrassed the ship were stowed away. The partitions of the cabins were taken down, so as to form a single vast apartment forward, as well as aft. This single room, besides, was more easy to warm, as the ice and damp found fewer corners in which to take refuge. It was also less difficult to ventilate it, by means of canvas funnels which opened without.

Each sailor exerted great energy in these preparations, and about the 25th of September they were completed. André Vasling had not shown himself the least active in

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this task. He devoted himself with especial zeal to the young girl's comfort, and if she, absorbed in thoughts of her poor Louis, did not perceive this, Jean Cornbutte did not fail soon to remark it. He spoke of it to Penellan; he recalled several incidents which completely enlightened him regarding his mate's intentions; André Vasling loved Marie, and reckoned on asking her uncle for her hand, as soon as it was proved beyond doubt that the castaways were irrevocably lost; they would return then to Dunkirk, and André Vasling would be well satisfied to wed a rich and pretty girl, who would then be the sole heiress of Jean Cornbutte.

But André, in his impatience, was often imprudent. He had several times declared that the search for the castaways was useless, when some new trace contradicted him, and enabled Penellan to exult over him. The mate, therefore, cordially detested the helmsman, who returned his dislike heartily. Penellan only feared that André might sow seeds of dissension among the crew, and persuaded Jean Cornbutte to answer him evasively on the first occasion.

The sky, always gloomy, filled the soul with sadness. A thick snow, lashed by violent winds, added to the horrors of their situation. The sun would soon altogether disappear. Had the clouds not gathered in masses above their heads, they might have enjoyed the moonlight, which was about to become really their sun during the long polar night; but, with the west winds, the snow did not cease to fall. Every morning it was necessary to clear off the sides of the ship, and to cut a new stairway in the ice to enable them to reach the ice-field. Penellan had a hole cut in the ice, not far from the ship. Every day the new crust which formed over its top was broken, and the water which was drawn thence, from a certain depth, was less cold than that at the surface.

All these preparations occupied about three weeks. It was then time to go forward with the search. The ship was imprisoned for six or seven months, and only the next thaw could open a new route across the ice. It was wise, then, to profit by this delay, and extend their explorations northward.

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CHAPTER VIII

PLAN OF THE EXPLORATIONS

On the 9th of October, Jean Cornbutte held a council to settle the plan of his operations, to which, that there might be union, zeal, and courage on the part of everyone, he admitted the whole crew. Map in hand, he clearly explained their situation.

The eastern coast of Greenland advances perpendicularly northward. The discoveries of the navigators have given the exact boundaries of those parts. In the extent of five hundred leagues, which separates Greenland from Spitzbergen, no land has been found. An island (Shannon Island) lay a hundred miles north of Gaël-Hamkes Bay, where the *Jeune-Hardie* was wintering.

If the Norwegian schooner, as was most probable, had been driven in this direction, supposing that she could not reach Shannon Island, it was here that Louis Cornbutte and his comrades must have sought for a winter asylum.

This opinion prevailed, despite André Vasling's opposition; and it was decided to direct the explorations on the side towards Shannon Island. If Louis Cornbutte and his comrades were still in existence, it was not probable that they would be able to resist the severities of the arctic winter. They must therefore be saved beforehand, or all hope would be lost. André Vasling knew all this better than anyone. He therefore resolved to put every possible obstacle in the way of the expedition.

The preparations for the journey were completed about the 20th of October. It remained to select the men who should compose the party. The young girl could not be deprived of the protection of Jean Cornbutte or of Penellan; neither of these could, on the other hand, be spared from the expedition.

The question, then, was whether Marie could bear the fatigues of such a journey. She had already passed through rough experiences without seeming to suffer from them, for she was a sailor's daughter, used from infancy to the fatigues of the sea, and even Penellan was not dismayed to see her struggling in the midst of this severe climate, against the dangers of the polar seas.

It was decided, therefore, after a long discussion, that she should go with them, and that a place should be reserved

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for her, at need, on the sledge, on which a little wooden hut was constructed, closed in hermetically. As for Marie, she was delighted, for she dreaded to be left alone without her two protectors.

The expedition was thus formed: Marie, Jean Cornbutte, Penellan, André Vasling, Aupic, and Fidèle Misonne were to go. Alaine Turquiette remained in charge of the brig, and Gervique and Gradlin stayed behind with him. New provisions of all kinds were carried; for Jean Cornbutte, in order to carry the exploration as far as possible, had resolved to establish depots along the route, at each seven or eight days' march. When the sledge was ready it was at once fitted up, and covered with a skin tent. The whole weighed some seven hundred pounds, which a pack of five dogs might easily carry over the ice.

On the 22nd of October, as the captain had foretold, a sudden change took place in the temperature. The sky cleared, the stars emitted an extraordinary light, and the moon shone above the horizon, no longer to leave the heavens for a fortnight. The thermometer descended to twenty-five degrees below zero. The departure was fixed for the following day.

CHAPTER IX

THE HOUSE OF SNOW

On the 23rd of October, at eleven in the morning, in a fine moonlight, the caravan set out. Jean Cornbutte followed the coast, and ascended northward. The steps of the travelers made no impression on the hard ice. Jean was forced to guide himself by points which he selected at a distance; sometimes he fixed upon a hill bristling with peaks; sometimes on a vast iceberg which pressure had raised above the plain.

At the first halt, after going fifteen miles, Penellan prepared to encamp. The tent was erected against an ice-block. Marie had not suffered seriously with the extreme cold, for luckily the breeze had subsided, and was much more bearable; but the young girl had several times been obliged to descend from her sledge to avert numbness from impeding the circulation of her blood. Otherwise, her little hut,

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hung with skins, afforded her all the comfort possible under the circumstances.

When night, or rather sleeping-time, came, the little hut was carried under the tent, where it served as a bed-room for Marie. The evening repast was composed of fresh meat, pemmican, and hot tea. Jean Cornbutte, to avert danger of the scurvy, distributed to each of the party a few drops of lemon-juice. Then all slept under God's protection.

But the sailors soon began to suffer one discomfort—that of being dazzled. Ophthalmia betrayed itself in Aupic and Misonne. The moon's light, striking on these vast white plains, burnt the eyesight, and gave the eyes insupportable pain. There was thus produced a very singlar effect of refraction. As they walked, when they thought they were about to put foot on a hillock, they stepped down lower, which often occasioned falls, happily so little serious that Penellan made them occasions for bantering. Still, he told them never to take a step without sounding the ground with the ferruled staff with which each was equipped.

About the 1st of November, ten days after they had set out, the caravan had gone fifty leagues to the northward. Weariness pressed heavily on all. Jean Cornbutte was painfully dazzled and his sight sensibly changed. Aupic and Misonne had to feel their way: for their eyes, rimmed with red, seemed burnt by the white reflection. Marie had been preserved from this misfortune by remaining within her hut, to which she confined herself as much as possible. Penellan, sustained by an indomitable courage, resisted all fatigue. But it was André Vasling who bore himself best, and upon whom the cold and dazzling seemed to produce no effect. His iron frame was equal to every hardship; and he was secretly pleased to see the most robust of his companions becoming discouraged, and already foresaw the moment when they would be forced to retreat to the ship again.

On the 1st of November it became absolutely necessary to halt for a day or two. As soon as the place for the encampment had been selected, they proceeded to arrange it. It was determined to erect a house of snow, which should be supported against one of the rocks of the promontory. Misonne at once marked out the foundations, which measured fifteen feet long by five wide. Penellan,

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Aupic, and Misonne, by aid of their knives, cut out great blocks of ice, which they carried to the chosen spot and set up, as masons would have built stone walls. The sides of the foundation were soon raised to a height and thickness of about five feet; for the materials were abundant, and the structure was intended to be sufficiently solid to last several days. The four walls were completed in eight hours; an opening had been left on the southern side, and the canvas of the tent, placed on these four walls, fell over the opening and sheltered it. It only remained to cover the whole with large blocks, to form the roof of this temporary structure.

After three more hours of hard work, the house was done; and they all went into it, overcome with weariness and discouragement. Jean Cornbutte suffered so much that he could not walk, and André Vasling so skillfully aggravated his gloomy feelings, that he forced from him a promise not to pursue his search farther in those frightful solitudes. Penellan did not know which saint to invoke. He thought it unworthy and craven to give up the search for reasons which had little weight, and tried to upset them; but in vain.

Meanwhile, though it had been decided to return, rest had become so necessary that for three days no preparations for departure were made. On the 4th of November, Jean Cornbutte began to bury on a point of the coast the provisions for which there was no use. A stake indicated the place of the deposit, in the improbable event that new explorations should be made in that direction. Every day since they had set out similar deposits had been made, so that they were assured of ample sustenance on the return, without the trouble of carrying them on the sledge.

The departure was fixed for ten in the morning, on the 5th. The most profound sadness filled the little band. Marie with difficulty restrained her tears, when she saw her uncle so completely discouraged. So many useless sufferings! so much labor lost! Penellan himself became ferocious in his ill-humor; he consigned everybody to the nether regions, and did not cease to wax angry at the weakness and cowardice of his comrades, who were more timid and tired, he said, than Marie, who would have gone to the end of the world without complaint

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André Vasling could not disguise the pleasure which this decision gave him. He showed himself more attentive than ever to the young girl, to whom he even held out hopes that a new search should be made when the winter was over; knowing well that it would then be too late!

CHAPTER X
BURIED ALIVE

THE evening before the departure, just as they were about to take supper, Penellan was breaking up some empty casks for firewood, when he was suddenly suffocated by a thick smoke. At the same instant the snow-house was shaken as if by an earthquake. The party uttered a cry of terror, and Penellan hurried outside.

It was entirely dark. A frightful tempest—for it was not a thaw—was raging, whirlwinds of snow careered around, and it was so exceedingly cold that the helmsman felt his hands rapidly freezing. He was obliged to go in again, after rubbing himself violently with snow.

"It is a tempest," said he. "May heaven grant that our house may withstand it, for, if the storm should destroy it, we should be lost!"

At the same time with the gusts of wind a noise was heard beneath the frozen soil; icebergs, broken from the promontory, dashed away noisily, and fell upon one another; the wind blew with such violence that it seemed sometimes as if the whole house moved from its foundation; phosphorescent lights, inexplicable in that latitude, flashed across the whirlwinds of the snow.

"Marie! Marie!" cried Penellan, seizing the girl's hands.

"We are in a bad case!" said Misonne.

"I know not if we shall escape," replied Aupic.

"Let us quit this snow-house!" said André Vasling.

"Impossible!" returned Penellan. "The cold outside is terrible; perhaps we can bear it by staying here."

"Give me the thermometer," demanded Vasling.

Aupic handed it to him. It showed ten degrees below zero inside the house, though the fire was lighted. Vasling raised the canvas which covered the opening, and pushed it aside hastily; for he would have been lacerated by the fall

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of ice which the wind hurled around, and which fell in a perfect hail-storm.

"Well, Vasling," said Penellan, "will you go out, then? You see that we are more safe here."

"Yes," said Jean Cornbutte; "and we must use every effort to strengthen the house in the interior."

"But a still more terrible danger menaces us," said Vasling.

"What?" asked Jean.

"The wind is breaking the ice against which we are propped, just as it has that of the promontory, and we shall be either driven out or buried!"

"That seems doubtful," said Penellan, "for it is freezing hard enough to ice over all liquid surfaces. Let us see what the temperature is."

He raised the canvas so as to pass out his arm, and with difficulty found the thermometer again, in the midst of the snow; but he at last succeeded in seizing it, and, holding the lamp to it, said, "Thirty-two degrees below zero! It is the coldest we have seen here yet!"

"Ten degrees more," said Vasling, "and the mercury will freeze!"

A mournful silence followed this remark.

About eight in the morning Penellan essayed a second time to go out to judge of their situation. It was necessary to give an escape to the smoke, which the wind had several timse repelled into the hut. The sailor wrapped his cloak tightly about him, made sure of his hood by fastening it to his head with a handkerchief, and then raised the canvas.

The opening was entirely obstructed by a resisting snow. Penellan took his staff, and succeeded in plunging it into the compact mass; but terror froze his blood when he perceived that the end of the staff was not free, and was checked by a hard body!

"Cornbutte," said he to the captain, who had come up to him, "we are buried under this snow!"

"What say you?" cried Jean Cornbutte.

"I say that the snow is massed and frozen around us and over us, and that we are buried alive!"

"Let us make an effort to clear the snow away," replied the captain.

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The two friends buttressed themselves against the obstacle which obstructed the opening, but they could not move it. The snow formed an iceberg more than five feet thick, and had become literally a part of the house. Jean could not suppress a cry, which awoke Misonne and Vasling. An oath burst from the latter, whose features contracted. At this moment the smoke, thicker than ever, poured into the house, for it could not find an issue.

"Malediction!" cried Misonne. "The pipe of the stove is sealed up by the ice!"

Penellan resumed his staff, and took down the pipe, after throwing snow on the embers to extinguish them, which produced such a smoke that the light of the lamp could scarcely be seen; then he tried with his staff to clear out the orifice, but he only encountered a rock of ice! A frightful end, preceded by a terrible agony, seemed to be their doom! The smoke, penetrating the throats of the unfortunate party, caused an insufferable pain, and air would soon fail them altogether.

Marie here rose, and her presence, which inspired Cornbutte with despair, imparted some courage to Penellan. He said to himself that it could not be that the poor girl was destined to so horrible a death.

"Ah!" said she, "you have made too much fire. The room is full of smoke!"

"Yes, yes," stammered Penellan.

"It is evident," resumed Marie, "for it is not cold, and it is long since we have felt too much heat."

No one dared to tell her the truth.

"See, Marie," said Penellan bluntly, "help us get breakfast ready. It is too cold to go out. Here is the chafing-dish, the spirit, and the coffee. Come, you others, a little pemmican first, as this wretched storm forbids us from hunting."

These words stirred up his comrades.

"Let us first eat," added Penellan, "and then we shall see about getting off."

Penellan set the example and devoured his share of the breakfast. His comrades imitated him, and then drank a cup of boiling coffee, which somewhat restored their spirits. Then Jean Cornbutte decided energetically that they should at once set about devising means of safety.

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André Vasling now said, "If the storm is still raging, which is probable, we must be buried ten feet under the ice, for we can hear no noise outside."

Penellan looked at Marie, who now understood the truth, and did not tremble. The helmsman first heated, by the flame of the spirit, the iron point of his staff, and successfully introduced it into the four walls of ice, but he could find no issue in either. Cornbutte then resolved to cut out an opening in the door itself. The ice was so hard that it was difficult for the knives to make the least impression on it. The pieces which were cut off soon encumbered the hut. After working hard for two hours, they had only hollowed out a space three feet deep.

Some more rapid method, and one which was less likely to demolish the house, must be thought of; for the farther they advanced the more violent became the effort to break off the compact ice. It occurred to Penellan to make use of the chafing-dish to melt the ice in the direction they wanted. It was a hazardous method, for, if their imprisonment lasted long, the spirit, of which they had but little, would be wanting when needed to prepare the meals. Nevertheless, the idea was welcomed on all hands, and was put in execution. They first cut a hole three feet deep by one in diameter, to receive the water which would result from the melting of the ice; and it was well that they took this precaution, for the water soon dripped under the action of the flames, which Penellan moved about under the mass of ice. The opening widened little by little, but this kind of work could not be continued long, for the water covering their clothes, penetrated to their bodies here and there. Penellan was obliged to pause in a quarter of an hour, and to withdraw the chafing-dish in order to dry himself. Misonne then took his place, and worked sturdily at the task.

In two hours, though the opening was five feet deep, the points of the staffs could not yet find an issue through the ice.

"It is not possible," said Jean Cornbutte, "that snow could have fallen in such abundance. It must have been gathered on this point by the wind. Perhaps we had better think of escaping in some other direction."

"I don't know," replied Penellan; "but if it were only

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for the sake of not discouraging our comrades, we ought to continue to pierce the wall where we have begun. We must find an issue ere long."

"Will not the spirit fail us?" asked the captain.

"I hope not. But let us, if necessary, dispense with coffee and hot drinks. Besides, that is not what most alarms me."

"What is it, then, Penellan?"

"Our lamp is going out, for want of oil, and we are fast exhausting our provisions."

The time for rest had come, and when Penellan had added one more foot to the opening, he lay down beside his comrades.

CHAPTER XI

A CLOUD OF SMOKE

THE next day, when the sailors awoke, they were surrounded by complete darkness. The lamp had gone out. Jean Cornbutte roused Penellan to ask him for the tinder-box, which was passed to him. Penellan rose to light the fire, but in getting up, his head struck against the ice ceiling. He was horrified, for on the evening before he could still stand upright. The chafing-dish being lighted up by the dim rays of the spirit, he perceived that the ceiling was a foot lower than before.

Penellan resumed work with desperation.

Marie, by the light which the chafing-dish cast upon Penellan's face, saw that despair and determination were struggling in his rough features for the mastery. She went to him, took his hands, and tenderly pressed them.

"She cannot, must not die thus!" he cried.

He took his chafing-dish, and once more attcked the narrow opening. He plunged in his staff, and felt no resistance. Had he reached the soft layers of the snow? He drew out his staff, and a bright ray penetrated to the house of ice!

"Here, my friends!" he shouted.

He pushed back the snow with his hands and feet. With the rays of light, a violent cold entered the cabin and seized upon everything moist, to freeze it in an instant. Penellan enlarged the opening with his cutlass, and at last was able to

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breathe the free air. He fell on his knees to thank God, and was soon joined by Marie and his comrades.

A magnificent moon lit up the sky, but the cold was so extreme that they could not bear it. They re-entered their retreat; but Penellan first looked about him. The promontory was no longer there, and the hut was now in the midst of a vast plain of ice. Penellan thought he would go to the sledge, where the provisions were. The sledge had disappeared!

The cold forced him to return. He said nothing to his companions. It was necessary, before all, to dry their clothing, which was done with the chafing-dish. The thermometer, held for an instant in the air, descended to thirty degrees below zero.

An hour after, Vasling and Penellan resolved to venture outside. They wrapped themselves up in their still wet garments, and went out by the opening, the sides of which had become as hard as a rock.

"We have been driven towards the northeast," said Vasling, reckoning by the stars.

"That would not be bad," said Penellan, "if our sledge had come with us."

"Is not the sledge there?" cried Vasling. "Then we are lost!"

"Let us look for it," replied Penellan.

They went around the hut, which formed a block more than fifteen feet high. An immense quantity of snow had fallen during the whole of the storm, and the wind had massed it against the only elevation which the plain presented. The entire block had been driven by the wind, in the midst of the broken icebergs, more than twenty-five miles to the northeast, and the prisoners had suffered the same fate as their floating prison. The sledge, supported by another iceberg, had been turned another way, for no trace of it was to be seen, and the dogs must have perished amid the frightful tempest.

André Vasling and Penellan felt despair taking possession of them. They did not dare to return to their companions. They did not dare to announce this fatal news to their comrades in misfortune. They climbed upon the block of ice in which the hut was hollowed, and could perceive nothing but the white immensity which encompassed them

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on all sides. Already the cold was beginning to stiffen their limbs, and the damp of their garments was being transformed into icicles which hung about them.

Just as Penellan was about to descend, he looked towards André. He saw him suddenly gaze in one direction, then shudder and turn pale.

"What is the matter, Vasling?" he asked.

"Nothing," replied the other. "Let us go down and urge the captain to leave these parts, where we ought never to have come, at once!"

Instead of obeying, Penellan ascended again, and looked in the direction which had drawn the mate's attention. A very different effect was produced on him, for he uttered a shout of joy, and cried, "Blessed be God!"

A light smoke was rising in the northeast. There was no possibility of deception. It indicated the presence of human beings. Penellan's cries of joy reached the rest below, and all were able to convince themselves with their eyes that he was not mistaken.

Without thinking of their want of provisions or the severity of the temperature, wrapped in their hoods, they were all soon advancing towards the spot whence the smoke arose in the northeast. This was evidently five or six miles off, and it was very difficult to take exactly the right direction. The smoke now disappeared, and no elevation served as a guiding mark, for the ice-plain was one united level. It was important, nevertheless, not to diverge from a straight line.

"Since we cannot guide ourselves by distant objects," said Jean Cornbutte, "we must use this method. Penellan will go ahead, Vasling twenty steps behind him, and I twenty steps behind Vasling. I can then judge whether or not Penellan diverges from the straight line."

They had gone on thus for half an hour, when Penellan suddenly stopped and listened. The party hurried up to him. "Did you hear nothing?" he asked.

"Nothing!" replied Misonne.

"It is strange," said Penellan. "It seemed to me I heard cries off to one side from this direction."

"Cries?" replied Marie. "Perhaps we are near our destination, then."

"That is no reason," said André Vasling. "In these

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high latitudes and cold regions sounds may be heard to a great distance."

"However that may be," replied Jean Cornbutte, "let us go forward, or we shall be frozen."

"No!" cried Penellan. "Listen!"

Some feeble sounds—quite perceptible, however—were heard. They seemed to be cries of distress. They were twice repeated. They seemed like cries for help. Then all became silent again.

"I was not mistaken," said Penellan. "Forward!"

He began to run in the direction whence the cries had proceeded. He went thus two miles, when, to his utter stupefaction, he saw a man lying on the ice. He went up to him, raised him, and lifted his arms to heaven in despair.

André Vasling, who was following close behind with the rest of the sailors, ran up and cried, "It is one of the castaways! It is our sailor Courtois!"

"He is dead!" replied Penellan. "Frozen to death!"

Jean Cornbutte and Marie came up beside the corpse, which was already stiffened by the ice. Despair was written on every face. The dead man was one of the comrades of Louis Cornbutte!

"Forward!" cried Penellan.

They went on for half an hour in perfect silence, and perceived an elevation which seemed to be land.

"It is Shannon Island," said Jean Cornbutte.

A mile farther on they saw smoke escaping from a snow-hut, closed by a wooden door. They shouted. Two men rushed out of the hut, and Penellan recognized one of them as Pierre Nouquet. "Pierre!" he cried.

Pierre stood still as if stunned, and unconscious of what was going on around him. André Vasling looked at Pierre Nouquet's companion with anxiety mingled with a cruel joy, for it was not Louis Cornbutte.

"Pierre! it is I" cried Penellan. "We are your friends!"

Pierre Nouquet recovered his senses, and fell into his old comrade's arms.

"And my son—and Louis!" cried Jean Cornbutte, in an accent of the most profound despair.

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CHAPTER XII

THE RETURN TO THE SHIP

At this moment a man, almost dead, dragged himself out of the hut and along the ice. It was Louis Cornbutte.

"My son!"

"My beloved!"

These two cries were uttered at the same time, and Louis Cornbutte fell fainting into the arms of his father and Marie, who drew him towards the hut, where their tender care soon revived him.

"My father! Marie!" cried Louis; "I shall not die without having seen you!"

"You will not die!" replied Penellan, "for all your friends are near you."

André Vasling must have hated Louis Cornbutte bitterly not to extend his hand to him, but he did not.

Pierre Nouquet was wild with joy. He embraced everybody; then he threw some wood into the stove, and soon a comfortable temperature was felt in the cabin.

There were two men there whom neither Jean Cornbutte nor Penellan recognized.

They were Jocki and Herming, the only two sailors of the crew of the Norwegian schooner who were left.

"My friends, we are saved!" said Louis. "My father! Marie! You have exposed yourselves to so many perils!"

"We do not regret it, my Louis," replied the father. "Your brig, the *Jeune-Hardie,* is securely anchored in the ice sixty leagues from here. We will rejoin her all together."

"When Courtois comes back he'll be mightily pleased," said Pierre Nouquet.

A mournful silence followed this, and Penellan apprised Pierre and Louis of their comrade's death by cold.

"My friends," said Penellan, "we will wait here until the cold decreases. Have you provisions and wood?"

"Yes; and we will burn what is left of the *Froöern.*"

The *Froöern* had indeed been driven to a place forty miles from where Louis Cornbutte had taken up his winter quarters. There she was broken up by the icebergs floated by the thaw, and the castaways were carried, with a part of the débris of their cabin, on the southern shores of Shannon Island.

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They were then five in number—Louis Cornbutte, Courtois, Pierre Nouquet, Jocki, and Herming. As for the rest of the Norwegian crew, they had been submerged with the long-boat at the moment of the wreck.

When Louis Cornbutte, shut in among the ice, realized what must happen, he took every precaution for passing the winter. He was an energetic man, very active and courageous; but, despite his firmness, he had been subdued by this horrible climate, and when his father found him he had given up all hope of life. He had not only had to contend with the elements, but with the ugly temper of the two Norwegian sailors, who owed him their existence. They were like savages, almost inaccessible to the most natural emotions. When Louis had the opportunity to talk to Penellan, he advised him to watch them carefully. In return, Penellan told him of André Vasling's conduct. Louis could not believe it, but Penellan convinced him that after his disappearance Vasling had always acted so as to secure Marie's hand.

The whole day was employed in rest and the pleasures of reunion. Misonne and Pierre Nouquet killed some sea-birds near the hut, whence it was not prudent to stray far. These fresh provisions and the replenished fire raised the spirits of the weakest. Louis Cornbutte got visibly better. It was the first moment of happiness these brave people had experienced. They celebrated it with enthusiasm in this wretched hut, six hundred leagues from the North Sea, in a temperature of thirty degrees below zero!

This temperature lasted till the end of the moon, and it was not until about the 17th of November, a week after their meeting, that Jean Cornbutte and his party could think of setting out. They only had the light of the stars to guide them; but the cold was less extreme, and even some snow fell.

Before quitting this place a grave was dug for poor Courtois. It was a sad ceremony, which deeply affected his comrades. He was the first of them who would not again see his native land.

Misonne had constructed, with the planks of the cabin, a sort of sledge for carrying the provisions, and the sailors drew it by turns. Jean Cornbutte led the expedition by the ways already traversed. Camps were established with

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great promptness when the times for repose came. Jean Cornbutte hoped to find his deposits of provisions again, as they had become well-nigh indispensable by the addition of four persons to the party. He was therefore very careful not to diverge from the route by which he had come.

By good fortune he recovered his sledge, which had stranded near the promontory where they had all run so many dangers. The dogs, after eating their straps to satisfy their hunger, had attacked the provisions in the sledge. These had sustained them, and they served to guide the party to the sledge, where there was a considerable quantity of provisions left. The little band resumed its march towards the bay. The dogs were harnessed to the sleigh, and no event of interest attended the return.

It was observed that Aupic, André Vasling, and the Norwegians kept aloof, and did not mingle with the others; but, unbeknown to themselves, they were narrowly watched. This germ of dissension more than once aroused the fears of Louis Cornbutte and Penellan.

About the 7th of December, twenty days after the discovery of the castaways, they perceived the bay where the *Jeune-Hardie* was lying. What was their astonishment to see the brig perched four yards in the air on blocks of ice! They hurried forward, much alarmed for their companions, and were received with joyous cries by Gervique, Turquiette, and Gradlin. All of them were in good health, though they too had been subjected to formidable dangers.

The tempest had made itself felt throughout the polar sea. The ice had been broken and displaced, crushed one piece against another, and had seized the bed on which the ship rested. Though its specific weight tended to carry it under water, the ice had acquired an incalculable force, and the brig had been suddenly raised up out of the sea.

The first moments were given up to the happiness inspired by the safe return. The exploring party were rejoiced to find everything in good condition, which assured them a supportable though it might be a rough winter. The ship had not been shaken by her sudden elevation, and was perfectly tight. When the season of thawing came, they would only have to slide her down an inclined plane, to launch her, in a word, in the once more open sea.

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But a bad piece of news spread gloom on the faces of Jean Cornbutte and his comrades. During the terrible gale the snow storehouse on the coast had been quite demolished; the provisions which it contained were scattered, and it had not been possible to save a morsel of them. When Jean and Louis Cornbutte learned this, they visited the hold and steward's room, to ascertain the quantity of provisions which still remained.

The thaw would not come until May, and the brig could not leave the bay before that period. They had therefore five winter months before them to pass amid the ice, during which fourteen persons were to be fed. Having made his calculations, Jean Cornbutte found that he would at most be able to keep them alive till the time for departure, by putting each and all on half rations. Hunting for game became compulsory in order to procure food in larger quantity.

For fear that they might again run short of provisions, it was decided to deposit them no longer in the ground. All of them were kept on board, and beds were disposed for the newcomers in the common lodging. Turquiette, Gervique, and Gradlin, during the absence of the others, had hollowed out a flight of steps in the ice, which enabled them easily to reach the ship's deck.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TWO RIVALS

ANDRE VASLING had been cultivating the good-will of the two Norwegian sailors. Aupic also made one of their band, and held himself apart, with loud disapproval of all the new measures taken; but Louis Cornbutte, to whom his father had transferred the command of the ship, and who had become once more master on board, would listen to no objections from that quarter, and in spite of Marie's advice to act gently, made it known that he intended to be obeyed on all points.

Nevertheless, the two Norwegians succeeded two days after, in getting possession of a box of salt meat. Louis ordered them to return it to him on the spot, but Aupic

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took their part, and André Vasling declared that the precautions about food could not be any longer enforced.

It was useless to attempt to show these men that these measures were for the common interest, for they knew it well, and only sought a pretext to revolt.

Penellan advanced towards the Norwegians, who drew their cutlasses; but, aided by Misonne and Turquiette, he succeeded in snatching the weapons from their hands, and gained possession of the salt meat. André Vasling and Aupic, seeing that matters were going against them, did not interfere. Louis Cornbutte, however, took the mate aside, and said to him:

"André Vasling, you are a wretch! I know your whole conduct, and I know what you are aiming at, but as the safety of the whole crew is confided to me, if any man of you thinks of conspiring to destroy them, I will stab him with my own hand!"

"Louis Cornbutte," replied the mate, "it is allowable for you to act the master; but remember that absolute obedience does not exist here, and that here the strongest alone makes the law."

Marie had never trembled before the dangers of the polar seas; but she was terrified by this hatred, of which she was the cause, and the captain's vigor hardly reassured her.

Despite this declaration of war, the meals were partaken of in common and at the same hours. Hunting furnished some ptarmigans and white hares; but this resource would soon fail them, with the approach of the terrible cold weather. This began at the solstice, on the 22d of December, on which day the thermometer fell to thirty-five degrees below zero. The men experienced pain in their ears, noses, and the extremities of their bodies. They were seized with a mortal torpor combined with headache, and their breathing became more and more difficult.

In this state they had no longer any courage to go hunting or to take any exercise. They remained crouched around the stove, which gave them but a meager heat; and when they went away from it, they perceived that their blood suddenly cooled.

Jean Cornbutte's health was seriously impaired, and he could no longer quit his lodging. Symptoms of scurvy

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manifested themselves in him, and his legs were soon covered with white spots. Marie was well, however, and occupied herself tending the sick ones with the zeal of a sister of charity. The honest fellows blessed her from the bottom of their hearts.

The 1st of January was one of the gloomiest of these winter days. The wind was violent, and the cold insupportable. They could not go out, except at the risk of being frozen. The most courageous were fain to limit themselves to walking on deck, sheltered by the tent. Jean Cornbutte, Gervique, and Gradlin did not leave their beds. The two Norwegians, Aupic, and André Vasling, whose health was good, cast ferocious looks at their companions, whom they saw wasting away.

Louis Cornbutte led Penellan on deck, and asked him how much firing was left.

"The coal was exhausted long ago," replied Penellan, "and we are about to burn our last pieces of wood."

"If we are not able to keep off this cold, we are lost," said Louis.

"There still remains a way—" said Penellan, "to burn what we can of the brig, from the barricading to the water-line; and we can even, if need be, demolish her entirely, and rebuild a smaller craft."

"That is an extreme means," replied Louis, "which it will be full time to employ when our men are well. For," he added in a low voice, "our force is diminishing, and that of our enemies seems to be increasing. That is extraordinary."

"It is true," said Penellan; "and unless we took the precaution to watch night and day, I know not what would happen to us."

"Let us take our hatchets," returned Louis, "and make our harvest of wood."

Despite the cold, they mounted on the forward barricading, and cut off all the wood which was not indispensably necessary to the ship; then they returned with this new provision. The fire was started afresh, and a man remained on guard to prevent it from going out.

Meanwhile Louis Cornbutte and his friends were soon tired out. They could not confide any detail of the life in common to their enemies. Charged with all the domestic

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cares, their powers were soon exhausted. The scurvy betrayed itself in Jean Cornbutte, who suffered intolerable pain. Gervique and Gradlin showed symptoms of the same disease. Had it not been for the lemon-juice, with which they were abundantly furnished, they would have speedily succumbed to their sufferings. This remedy was not spared in relieving them.

But one day, the 15th of January, when Louis Cornbutte was going down into the steward's room to get some lemons, he was stupefied to find that the barrels in which they were kept had disappeared. He hurried up and told Penellan of this misfortune. A theft had been committed, and it was easy to recognize its authors. Louis Cornbutte then understood why the health of his enemies continued so good! His friends were no longer strong enough to take the lemons away from them, though his life and that of his comrades depended on the fruit; and he now sank, for the first time, into a gloomy state of despair.

CHAPTER XIV

DISTRESS

On the 20th of January most of the crew had not the strength to leave their beds. Each, independently of his woolen coverings, had a buffalo-skin to protect him against the cold; but as soon as he put his arms outside the clothes, he felt a severe pain which obliged him quickly to cover them again.

Meanwhile, Louis having lit the stove fire, Penellan, Misonne, and André Vasling left their beds and crouched around it. Penellan prepared some boiling coffe, which gave them some strength, as well as Marie, who joined them in partaking of it.

Louis Cornbutte approached his father's bedside; the old man was almost motionless, and his limbs were helpless from disease. He muttered some disconnected words, which carried grief to his son's heart.

"Louis," said he, "I am dying! I suffer! Save me!"

Louis took a decisive resolution. He went up to the mate, and, controlling himself with difficulty, said: "Do you know where the lemons are, Vasling?"

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"In the steward's room, I suppose," returned the mate, without stirring.

"You know very well they are not, as you have stolen them!"

"You are master, Louis Cornbutte, and may say and do anything."

"For pity's sake, André Vasling, my father is dying! You can save him,—answer!"

"I have nothing to answer," replied André Vasling.

"Wretch!" cried Penellan, throwing himself, cutlass in hand, on the mate.

"Help, friends!" shouted Vasling, retreating.

Aupic and the two Norwegian sailors jumped from their beds and placed themselves behind him. Turquiette, Penellan, and Louis prepared to defend themselves. Pierre Nouquet and Gradlin, though suffering much, rose to second them.

"You are still too strong for us," said Vasling. "We do not wish to fight on an uncertainty."

The sailors were so weak that they dared not attack the four rebels, for, had they failed, they would have been lost. "André Vasling!" said Louis, in a gloomy tone, "if my father dies, you will have murdered him; and I will kill you like a dog!"

Vasling and his confederates retired to the other end of the cabin, and did not reply.

It was then necessary to renew the supply of wood, and, in spite of the cold, Louis went on deck and began to cut away a part of the barricading, but was obliged to retreat in a quarter of an hour, for he was in danger of falling, overcome by the freezing air. As he passed, he cast a glance at the thermometer left outside, and saw that the mercury was frozen. The cold, then, exceeded forty-two degrees below zero. The weather was dry, and the wind blew from the north.

On the 26th the wind changed to the northeast, and the thermometer outside stood at thirty-five degrees. Jean Cornbutte was in agony, and his son had searched in vain for some remedy with which to relieve his pain. On this day, however, throwing himself suddenly on Vasling, he managed to snatch a lemon from him which he was about to suck. Vasling made no attempt to recover it. He seemed

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to be awaiting an opportunity to accomplish his wicked designs.

The lemon-juice somewhat relieved old Cornbutte, but it was necessary to continue the remedy. Marie begged Vasling on her knees to produce the lemons, but he did not reply, and soon Penellan heard the wretch say to his accomplices: "The old fellow is dying. Gervique, Gradlin, and Nouquet are not much better. The others are daily losing their strength. The time is near when their lives will belong to us!"

It was then resolved by Louis Cornbutte and his adherents not to wait, and lose the little strength still remaining to them. They determined to act the next night, and to kill these wretches, so as not to be killed by them.

The temperature rose a little. Louis Cornbutte ventured to go out with his gun in search of some game. He proceeded some three miles from the ship, and, deceived by the effects of the mirage and refraction, he went farther than he intended. It was imprudent, for recent tracks of ferocious animals were to be seen. He did not wish, however, to return without some fresh meat, and continued on his route; but he then experienced a strange feeling which turned his head. It was what is commonly called "white vertigo."

The reflection of the ice hillocks and fields affected him from head to foot, and it seemed to him that the dazzling color penetrated him and caused an irresistible nausea. His eye was attacked. His sight became uncertain. He thought he should go mad with the glare. Without fully understanding this terrible effect, he advanced on his way, and soon put up a ptarmigan, which he eagerly pursued. The bird soon fell, and in order to reach it Louis leaped from an ice-block and fell heavily; for the leap was at least ten feet, and the refraction made him think it was only two. The vertigo then seized him, and, without knowing why, he began to call for help, though he had not been injured by the fall. The cold began to take him, and he rose with pain, urged by the sense of self-preservation.

Suddenly, without being able to account for it, he smelt an odor of boiling fat. As the ship was between him and the wind, he supposed that this odor proceeded from her, and could not imagine why they should be cooking fat,

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this being a dangerous thing to do, as it was likely to attract the white bears.

Louis returned towards the ship, absorbed in reflections which soon inspired his excited mind with terror. It seemed to him as if colossal masses were moving on the horizon, and he asked himself if there was not another ice-quake. Several of these masses interposed themselves between him and the ship, and appeared to rise about its sides. He stopped to gaze at them more attentively, when to his horror he recognized a herd of gigantic bears.

These animals had been attracted by the odor of grease which had surprised Louis. He sheltered himself behind a hillock, and counted three, which were scaling the blocks on which the *Jeune-Hardie* was resting.

A terrible anguish oppressed his heart. How resist these redoubtable enemies? Would André Vasling and his confederates unite with the rest on board in the common peril? Could Penellan and the others, half-starved, benumbed with cold, resist these formidable animals, made wild by unassuaged hunger? Would they not be surprised by an unlooked-for attack?

Louis made these reflections rapidly. The bears had crossed the blocks, and were mounting to the assault of the ship. He might then quit the block which protected him; he went nearer, clinging to the ice, and could soon see the enormous animals tearing the tent with their paws, and leaping on the deck. He thought of firing his gun to give his comrades notice; but if these came up without arms, they would inevitably be torn to pieces, and nothing showed as yet that they were even aware of their new danger.

CHAPTER XV

THE WHITE BEARS

After Louis Cornbutte's departure, Penellan had carefully shut the cabin door, which opened at the foot of the deck steps. He returned to the stove, which he took it upon himself to watch, while his companions regained their berths in search of a little warmth.

It was then six in the evening, and Penellan set about preparing supper. He went down into the steward's room

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for some salt meat, which he wished to soak in the boiling water. When he returned, he found André Vasling in his place, cooking some pieces of grease in a basin.

"I was there before you," said Penellan roughly; "why have you taken my place?"

"For the same reason that you claim it," returned Vasling: "because I want to cook my supper."

"You will take that off at once, or we shall see!"

"We shall see nothing," said Vasling; "my supper shall be cooked in spite of you."

"You shall not eat it, then," cried Penellan, rushing upon Vasling, who seized his cutlass, crying, "Help, Norwegians! Help, Aupic!"

These, in the twinkling of an eye, sprang to their feet, armed with pistols and daggers. The crisis had come.

Penellan precipitated himself upon Vasling, to whom, no doubt, was confided the task to fight him alone; for his accomplices rushed to the beds where lay Misonne, Turquiette, and Nouquet. The latter, ill and defenceless, was delivered over to Herming's ferocity. The carpenter seized a hatchet, and, leaving his berth, hurried up to encounter Aupic. Turquiette and Jocki, the Norwegian, struggled fiercely. Gervique and Gradlin, suffering horribly, were not even conscious of what was passing around them.

Nouquet soon received a stab in the side, and Herming turned to Penellan, who was fighting desperately. André Vasling had seized him round the body.

At the beginning of the affray the basin had been upset on the stove, and the grease running over the burning coals, impregnated the atmosphere with its odor. Marie rose with cries of despair, and hurried to the bed of old Jean Cornbutte.

Vasling, less strong than Penellan, soon perceived that the latter was getting the better of him. They were too close together to make use of their weapons. The mate, seeing Herming, cried out, "Help, Herming!"

"Help, Misonne!" shouted Penellan, in his turn.

But Misonne was rolling on the ground with Aupic, who was trying to stab him with his cutlass. The carpenter's hatchet was of little use to him, for he could not wield it, and it was with the greatest difficulty that he parried the lunges which Aupic made with his knife.

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Meanwhile blood flowed amid the groans and cries. Turquiette, thrown down by Jocki, a man of immense strength, had received a wound in the shoulder, and he tried in vain to clutch a pistol which hung in the Norwegian's belt. The latter held him as in a vice, and it was impossible for him to move.

As Vasling was being held by Penellan close against the door, Herming rushed up. He was about to stab the Breton's back with his cutlass, but the latter felled him to the earth with a vigorous kick. His effort to do this enabled Vasling to disengage his right arm; but the door, against which they pressed with all their weight, suddenly yielded, and Vasling fell over.

Of a sudden a terrible growl was heard, and a gigantic bear appeared on the steps. Vasling saw him first. He was not four feet away from him. At the same moment a shot was heard, and the bear, wounded or frightened, retreated. Vasling, who had succeeded in regaining his feet, set out in pursuit of him, abandoning Penellan.

Penellan then replaced the door, and looked around him. Misonne and Turquiette, tightly garrotted by their antagonists, had been thrown into a corner, and made vain efforts to break loose. Penellan rushed to their assistance, but was overturned by the two Norwegians and Aupic. His exhausted strength did not permit him to resist these three men, and at a heavy blow he sank unconscious. Then, at the cries of the mate, his accomplices hurried on deck, thinking that Louis Cornbutte was to be encountered.

André Vasling was struggling with a bear, which he had already twice stabbed with his knife. The animal, beating the air with his heavy paws, was trying to clutch Vasling; he retiring little by little on the barricading, was apparently doomed, when a second shot was heard. The bear fell. André Vasling raised his head and saw Louis Cornbutte in the ratlines of the mizzen-mast, his gun in his hand. Louis had shot the bear in the heart, and he was dead.

Hate overcame gratitude in Vasling's breast; but before satisfying it, he looked around him. Aupic's head was broken by a paw-stroke, and he lay lifeless on deck. Jocki, hatchet in hand, was with difficulty parrying the blows of the second bear which had just killed Aupic. The animal had received two wounds, and still struggled desperately.

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A third bear was directing his way towards the ship's prow. Vasling paid no attention to him, but, followed by Herming, went to the aid of Jocki; but Jocki, seized by the beast's paws, was crushed, and when the bear fell under the shots of the other two men, he held a corpse in his shaggy arms.

"We are only two, now," said Vasling, with gloomy ferocity, "but if we yield, it will not be without vengeance!"

Herming reloaded his pistol without replying. Before all, the third bear must be got rid of. Vasling looked forward, but did not see him. On raising his eyes, he perceived him erect on the barricading, clinging to the ratlines and trying to reach Louis. Vasling let his gun fall, which he had aimed at the animal, while a fierce joy glittered in his eyes. "Ah," he cried to the bear, "you owe me that vengeance!"

Louis took refuge in the top of the mast. The bear kept mounting, and was not more than six feet from Louis, when he raised his gun and pointed it at the animal's heart.

Vasling raised his weapon to shoot Louis if the bear fell.

Louis fired, but the bear did not appear to be hit, for he leaped with a bound towards the top. The whole mast shook.

Vasling uttered a shout of exultation.

"Herming," he cried, "go and find Marie! Go and find my betrothed!"

Herming descended the cabin stairs.

Meanwhile the furious beast had thrown himself upon Louis, who was trying to shelter himself on the other side of the mast; but at the moment that his enormous paw was raised to break his head, Louis, seizing one of the backstays, let himself slip down to the deck, not without danger, for a ball hissed by his ear when he was half-way down. Vasling had shot at him, and missed him. The two adversaries now confronted each other, cutlass in hand.

The combat was about to become decisive. To glut his vengeance, and to have the young girl witness her lover's death, Vasling had deprived himself of Herming's aid. He could now reckon only on himself.

Louis and Vasling seized each other by the collar, and held each other with iron grip. One of them must fall. They struck each other violently. The blows were only half parried, for blood soon flowed from both. Vasling tried to clasp his adversary about the neck with his arm,

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to bring him to the ground. Louis, knowing that he who fell was lost, prevented him, and succeeded in grasping his two arms; but in doing this he let fall his cutlass.

Pietous cries now assailed his ears; it was Marie's voice. Herming was trying to drag her up. Louis was seized with a desperate rage. He stiffened himself to bend Vasling's loins; but at this moment the combatants felt themselves seized in a powerful embrace. The bear, having descended from the mast, had fallen upon the two men. Vasling was pressed against the animal's body. Louis felt his claws entering his flesh. The bear was strangling both of them.

"Help! help! Herming!" cried the mate.

"Help! Penellan!" cried Louis.

Steps were heard on the stairs. Penellan appeared, loaded his pistol, and discharged it in the bear's ear; he roared; the pain made him relax his paws for a moment, and Louis, exhausted, fell motionless on the deck; but the bear, closing his paws tightly in a supreme agony, fell, dragging down the wretched Vasling, whose body was crushed under him.

Penellan hurried to Louis Cornbutte's assistance. No serious wound endangered his life; he had only lost his breath for a moment.

"Marie!" he said, opening his eyes.

"Saved!" replied Penellan. "Herming is lying there with a knife-wound in his stomach."

"And the bears——"

"Dead, Louis; dead, like our enemies! But for those beasts we should have been lost. Truly, they came to our succor. Let us thank Heaven!"

Louis and Penellan descended to the cabin, and Marie fell into their arms.

CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION

HERMING, mortally wounded, had been carried to a berth by Misonne and Turquiette, who had succeeded in getting free. He was already at the last gasp of death; and the two sailors occupied themselves with Nouquet, whose wound was not, happily, a serious one.

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But a greater misfortune had overtaken Louis Cornbutte. His father no longer gave any signs of life. Had he died of anxiety for his son, delivered over to his enemies? Had he succumbed in presence of these terrible events? They could not tell. But the poor old sailor, broken by disease, had ceased to live!

At this unexpected blow, Louis and Marie fell into a said despair; then they knelt at the bedside and wept, as they prayed for Jean Cornbutte's soul. Penellan, Misonne, and Turquiette left them alone in the cabin, and went on deck. The bodies of the three bears were carried forward. Penellan decided to keep their skins, which would be of no little use; but he did not think for a moment of eating their flesh. Besides, the number of men to feed was now much decreased. The bodies of Vasling, Aupic, and Jocki, thrown into a hole dug on the coast, were soon rejoined by that of Herming. The Norwegian died during the night, without repentance or remorse, foaming at the mouth with rage.

Jean Cornbutte was buried on the coast. He had left his native land to find his son, and had died in these terrible regions! His grave was dug on an eminence, and the sailors placed over it a simple wooden cross.

From that day, Louis Cornbutte and his comrades passed through many other trials; but the lemons, which they found, restored them to health. Gervique, Gradlin, and Nouquet were able to rise from their berths a fortnight after these terrible events, and to take a little exercise.

Soon hunting for game became more easy and its results more abundant. The water-birds returned in large numbers. After the equinox, the sun remained constantly above the horizon. The eight months of perpetual daylight had begun. This continual sunlight, with the increasing though still quite feeble heat, soon began to act upon the ice.

Great precautions were necessary in launching the ship from the lofty layer of ice which surrounded her. She was therefore securely propped up, and it seemed best to await the breaking up of the ice; but the lower mass, resting on a bed of already warm water, detached itself little by little, and the ship gradually descended with it. Early in April she had reached her natural level.

In May the thaw became very rapid. The snow which

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covered the coast melted on every hand, and formed a thick mud, which made it well-nigh impossible to land. Small heathers, rosy and white, peeped out timidly above the lingering snow, and seemed to smile at the little heat they received. The thermometer at last rose above zero.

Twenty miles off, the ice masses, entirely separated, floated towards the Atlantic Ocean. Though the sea was not quite free around the ship, channels opened by which Louis Cornbutte wished to profit.

On the 21st of May, after a parting visit to his father's grave, Louis at last set out from the bay. The hearts of the honest sailors were filled at once with joy and sadness, for one does not leave without regret a place where a friend has died. The wind blew from the north, and favored their departure. The ship was often arrested by ice-banks, which were cut with saws, icebergs not seldom confronted her, and it was necessary to blow them up with powder. For a month the way was full of perils, which sometimes brought the ship to the verge of destruction; but the crew were sturdy, and used to these dangerous exigencies. Penellan, Pierre Nouquet, Turquiette, Fidèle Misonne, did the work of ten sailors, and Marie had smiles of gratitude for each.

The *Jeune-Hardie* at last passed beyond the ice in the latitude of Jean-Mayen Island. About the 25th of June she met ships going northward for seals and whales. She had been nearly a month emerging from the Polar Sea.

On the 16th of August she came in view of Dunkirk. She had been signaled by the look-out, and the whole population flocked to the jetty. The sailors of the ship were soon clasped in the arms of their friends. The old curé received Louis Cornbutte and Marie with patriarchal arms, and of the two masses which he said on the following day, the first was for the repose of Jean Cornbutte's soul, and the second to bless these two lovers, so long united in misfortune.

THE END

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The Pearl of Lima
OR
Martin Paz

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The Pearl of Lima

CHAPTER I

THE "PLAZA MAYOR"

THE sun had just sunk behind the snowy peaks of the Cordilleras, and, although the beautiful Peruvian sky was being covered by the veil of night, the atmosphere was clear and refreshing in its balmy coolness. It was just the hour when a European might enjoy the climate, and with open veranda luxuriate in the grateful breeze.

The stars were beginning to appear and the promenaders betook themselves to the streets of Lima, where, protected merely by their light capes, they discussed the most trivial topics with the most profound gravity. The general direction of the throng was toward the grand square, the Plaza Mayor, the forum of the ancient "City of the Kings."

The same cool atmosphere which tempted the population to an evening stroll had the effect of bringing out the various hawkers, who threaded their way amidst the crowds shouting aloud the praises of their different wares. The women, wearing mantles which effectually concealed their faces, glided, as it were, between the groups of smokers. A few ladies there were in evening dress, with their *coiffure*, composed of their own luxuriant hair, gracefully adorned with natural flowers; but these were lounging back in the wide barouches. The Indians were seen making their sullen way without once lifting their eyes, and indicating neither by gesture nor by word the rancorous envy that was gnawing at their spirit, a contrast altogether with the half-breeds, who, repudiated as themselves, protested more openly against their civil wrongs.

As for the Spaniards, those haughty descendants of Pizarro, they held their heads aloft as though they were still entitled to the homage of the days of old, when their ancestors had founded the city of the kings. They entertained supreme contempt alike for the Indians whom they had conquered, and for the half-breeds who had sprung from their own connection with the people of the New World. Like every other subjugated race, the Indians

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chafed at their condition, and regarded with common antipathy not only the conquerors who had overturned the ancient empire of the Incas, but also the half-breeds, that upstart race, as arrogant as vulgar. With regard to these half-breeds, it may be asserted that they were Spaniards as far as their scorn of the Indians could make them so, while they were thorough Indians in the detestation in which they held the Spaniards. The two sentiments were about equally developed, and united in embittering their lives.

It was a party of the young half-breeds that was now seen clustering near the fine fountain that adorns the center of the Plaza Mayor. Each of them was wearing a "poncho," which consisted simply of an oblong piece of cotton, with an aperture in the middle to admit the head of the wearer, and nearly all of them were arrayed in loose trousers, gay with stripes of a thousand colors; on their heads they had broad-brimmed hats made of straw from Guayaquil. They gesticulated violently as they talked.

"You are right, André," said a little man named Millaflores, speaking in a most obsequious tone.

This Millaflores was a hanger-on, a sort of parasite of André Certa, a young half-breed, and the son of a wealthy merchant who had been killed in one of the late insurrections. Inheriting an ample fortune, André had sought by a lavish prodigality to surround himself with a bevy of friends from whom he exacted nothing more than the most servile deference.

"And what good, I should like to know," said André, raising his voice higher and higher as he spoke, "what good ever comes of these changes of government, and these everlasting *pronunciamentos* that are constantly agitating Peru. As long as there is no equality established, it matters little whether it be Gambarra or Santa Cruz that rules us."

"Well said! well said, indeed!" shrieked little Millaflores, who, in spite of the passing of a law for universal equality, could never be an equal to any man of spirit.

"Here am I," continued André Certa, "the son of a merchant, and how is it that I am not allowed a carriage drawn by anything better than mules! Whose ships were they but mine that brought prosperity into the land? And isn't an aristocracy of wealth far more than a match for all the empty titles of the grandees of Spain?"

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"Disgraceful!" chimed in the voice of one of the young half-breeds; "utterly disgraceful! Just look there! there goes Don Fernando! see him how he drives along in his chariot drawn by horses! Don Fernando d'Aguillo! he can scarcely afford to buy a dinner for his coachman, and yet look at the air with which he lords it about the Plaza! Look, there's another of them! the Marquis Don Vegal!"

A splendid carriage at that moment turned into the Plaza, and proved in truth to belong to the Marquis Don Vegal, Chevalier of Alcantara, of Malta, and of Charles III. The nobleman had come out only to relieve the tedium of the evening, and with no thought of ostentation or display. As he sat with his head bent in anxious care, he paid no regard to the envious sneers with which the groups of half-breeds greeted him while his carriage and four dashed through the crowd.

"I hate that man," growled André Certa.

"Ah! you will not need to hate him long," replied one of the young men.

"Perhaps not," said André. "These lordlings have seen nearly the last of their luxuries, and have pretty well exhausted all their jewels and family plate."

"Yes, indeed; no one knows that better than yourself, familiar as you are with old Samuel the Jew."

"True; the old Jew's ledger shows plenty of credit and lots of debt, and his strong box is full to the hasp with the *débris* of the fine fortunes of the old aristocrats But the day isn't far off, and a jolly day it will be, when these Spaniards will all be beggars, like their own Cæsar de Bazan."

"Capital, André," put in Millaflores; "and then you will mount upon your own millions, and double them besides. But when do you marry old Samuel's daughter? Sarah is a true child of Lima, a Peruvian to the very tips of her fingers; nothing of the Jewess about her except her name."

"Oh, within a month," said André. "In another month there will not be a fortune in the land to compete with mine."

"But why," was the inquiry of one of the admiring group, "why don't you marry the daughter of some Spaniard who can boast a noble lineage?"

"Because I despise the race as much as I hate it," replied

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André; but he did not think it necessary to confess that his acquaintanceship had been ignominiously rejected in every aristocratic circle to which he had endeavored to get an introduction.

At this instant André was unceremoniously jostled by a tall man with grisly hair, whose thick-set limbs indicated more than an ordinary amount of physical strength.

The man was an Indian, a native of the mountains; he wore a shirt of the coarsest serge, that, opening at the neck, revealed the shaggiest of bosoms; his short linen trousers were gaudy with green stripes, and his stone-colored stockings were fastened at the knee with crimson garters; a pair of glittering ear-rings hung far below the border of his hat.

After jostling André, the man stood and stared at him.

"You vile Indian!" exclaimed the assaulted half-breed, as he raised his hand to strike him.

His companions held him back, and Millaflores cried, "André, André! mind what you are about!"

"What does the wretched slave mean by daring to jostle me?" exclaimed André furiously.

"Never mind, he's only an idiot; it is Sambo!"

The Indian continued steadily staring at the man whom he had intentionally affronted. André, beside himself with rage, laid his hand upon the dagger which he carried in his belt, and was upon the point of attacking his aggressor, when a shrill cry, like the note of the Peruvian linnet, re-echoed above the tumult of the crowd, and in a moment Sambo had disappeared.

"Miserable coward!" ejaculated the furious André.

Millaflores gently begged him to control his passion, and leave the Plaza. The group of young men began to retire towards the lower end of the promenade.

The Plaza Mayor was still the scene of bustling animation. Night had come on, and gliding about with their identity completely disguised by their mantles, the women of Lima truly deserved their name of the "tapadas,"—the "concealed." The noise and tumult seemed ever to be increasing. The horse-guards, sentineled at the central gateway of the Viceroy's palace, had as much as they could do to retain their places undisturbed by the thronging of the busy crowd. Industry of every sort appeared to have found a general *rendezvous,* and the whole place was well-nigh

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given up to the exhibition of articles for sale. The lower story of the palace, and the very basement of the cathedral had been converted into shops, and the entire locality was thus transformed into a vast bazaar for all the varied products of the tropics.

Louder and louder waxed the noise; when all at once the bell from the cathedral tower tolled out the Angelus, and the tumult was completely hushed. The clamor of business was replaced by the whisperings of prayer. The ladies paused upon the promenade, and began to tell their beads.

During the interval of the suspended traffic, and while the mass of the people was still in the attitude of devotion, a young girl, accompanied by an old duenna, was trying to make her way through the thickest of the crowd. Angry remonstrances met the ears of both as their movements interrupted the prayers of those they passed. The girl wanted to stand and wait, but the undaunted duenna dragged her resolutely on. First some one would say, "What are these daughters of the devil doing?" and then another would ask, "Who is this cursed ballet-girl?" till at last, overwhelmed by confusion, the girl refused to advance a step.

At that instant a muleteer was proceeding to take her by the shoulder and force her on to her knees; but he had scarcely raised his hand for the purpose, when he was seized by a strong arm from behind, and felled to the ground. The incident, though it was quick as lightning, caused some confusion for a moment.

"Make your escape, young lady," said a voice, gently and respectfully, close to the girl's ear.

Pale with terror she cast a glance behind her, and saw a tall young Indian standing with folded arms and looking defiantly at the muleteer before him.

"Alas, alas!" cried the duenna, "we have got into trouble," and hurried the girl away.

Bruised by his fall the muleteer rose to his feet, but not deeming it prudent to demand satisfaction from an opponent of such resolute bearing as the young Indian, he retired towards his mules, muttering angry but useless threats as he went.

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CHAPTER II

AN INDIAN RIVAL

THE town of Lima nestles as it were in the valley of the Rimac, at about nine miles from the mouth of the river. From east to west Lima is about two miles long, but not more than a mile and a quarter wide from the bridge to the walls. These walls, which are about twelve feet high, and ten feet thick at their base, are constructed of a peculiar kind of bricks, known as "adobes," dried in the sun.

This is the ancient "City of the Kings," founded in 1534 by Pizarro on the feast of the Epiphany. It has never ceased to be the scene of revolution. Formerly it was the chief emporium of America in the whole Pacific, to which it was opened by the port of Callao. The climate makes Lima one of the most agreeable places of residence in the New World. The wind never deviates from one of two directions; either it blows from the south-west, and brings with it the refreshing influence which it has gained in traversing the Pacific, or it comes from the south-east, invigorating and cheering with the coolness which it has gathered from the snowy summits of the Cordilleras. The nights, too, at Lima are delightful as elsewhere in the tropics; the dew which rises is a bountiful source of nutriment to a soil that is ever exposed to the rays of a cloudless sun.

On the evening in question, the girl, still attended by her duenna, arrived from the great square at the bridge of the Rimac without further misadventure. Her excitement was still intense, and made her start at every sound which brought to her imagination either the ringing of the muleteer's bells, or the whistle of an Indian.

The girl was Sarah, the daughter of Samuel the Jew, and she was now about to enter the house of her father. She was dressed in a dark-colored skirt plaited round the bottom in such close folds as to oblige her to take the very shortest steps, giving her that graceful movement which is so generally characteristic of the young women of Lima. The skirt was trimmed with lace and flowers, and was partially concealed by a silk mantle, the hood of which enveloped her head; stockings of fine texture, and pretty little satin slippers were visible below her becoming dress; bracelets of considerable value encircled her wrists, and her whole appear-

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ance afforded a charming illustration of what the Spaniards express so pointedly by their term "donayre."

Millaflores had only declared the truth when he had said that Sarah had nothing Jewish about her but her name; she was undeniably a type of the señoras whose beauty has commanded such universal homage.

The old duenna was a Jewess, with avarice and cupidity stamped indelibly upon her features; she was a devoted servant to Samuel, who knew what she was worth, and remunerated her accordingly.

Just at the moment that they entered the suburb of San Lazaro, a man, dressed as a monk, with his cowl over his head, passed them with a keen and scrutinizing look of inquiry. He was very tall, and had one of those commanding figures which seem at once to indicate repose and benevolence. It was Farther Joachim di Camarones. As he passed the girl he gave her a kindly smile of recognition; she glanced hastily at her companion, and merely acknowledge his greeting by a gentle movement of her hand.

"Has it come to this?" said the old woman, in a tone of annoyance, "isn't it enough to be insulted by these Christian dogs, and here you must be bowing and smiling to one of their priests! I suppose some day we shall see you take up a rosary, and go off to their fine services in church."

The girl colored as she replied, "You are indulging in strange conjectures."

"Strange! not more strange, I think, than your behavior. What would my master say if he knew all that has passed this evening?"

"It's no fault of mine, I should suppose," rejoined the girl, "if a brutal muleteer insults me in the street."

"I know very well what I mean," grumbled the old woman; "I wasn't alluding to any muleteer."

"Then," inquired Sarah, "do you blame that young Indian for taking my part against the crowd?"

"Ah! ah! but it isn't the first time the young fellow has crossed your path."

Fortunately for her, the maiden's face was covered by her mantilla, otherwise the evening shades would not have been deep enough to conceal the girl's flush of excitement from the inquisitive eye of the old domestic.

"But never mind the Indian now," continued the old

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crone; "I will keep my eye on that business. What troubles me most now is that rather than interrupt those Christians at their prayers, you should acutally stand still and wait while they knelt, and I really believe you were going to kneel too. Ah! señora, if your father were to know that I could allow you to insult your faith like that, he would not be long in sending me adrift."

The girl however, heard nothing of the reproof. The very mention of the Indian had turned her thoughts into a sweeter channel. She recalled what was to her a providential interference on her behalf, and could not divest herself of a belief that her deliverer was still not far behind, following in the shade. There was a certain fearlessness in her character that became her marvelously. Proud she was with the pride of a Spaniard, and if she felt her interest awakened by the young Indian, it was chiefly because he, too, was proud, and had not sought a glance of her eye as an acknowledgment for his protection.

In truth, she was not far wrong in her surmise that the Indian was not out of sight. After his interference in her defence, he had resolved to make her retreat entirely secure; and accordingly, when the observers were dispersed, he proceeded to follow her without being perceived.

A well-built man was Martin Paz, his figure being nobly set off by the costume that he wore as an Indian of the Mountains. Below the wide brim of his straw hat clustered massive locks of thick black hair which harmonized perfectly with his dark complexion. His eyes were at once brilliant and soft, and a well-formed nose rose above lips so small as to be quite rare in any of his race. He was of the lineage of the courageous Manco-Capac, and in his veins coursed the ardent blood that was capable of great achievements.

Martin Paz was attired in a poncho of many hues; from his girdle was suspended one of those Malay daggers which are ever formidable in a practiced hand, and seem to be welded to the arm that wields them. Had he been in North America, by the wild borders of Lake Ontario, he would, to a certainty, have been a chief of those wandering tribes who fought so heroically against their English foes.

Martin was quite aware not only that Sarah was the daughter of the wealthy Jew, but also, that she was be-

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trothed to the rich half-breed, André Certa; he knew that her birth, her social position, and her fortune, alike prohibited her from ever having any relations with himself; but overlooking all impossibilities, he gave free license to his infatuation.

Plunged in his own reflections, he was hastening on his way, when he was suddenly accosted by two other Indians.

"Martin Paz," said one of them, "don't you intend to go to-night and meet our brothers in the mountains?"

"I shall be there," was Martin's curt reply.

"The schooner *Annunciation*," went on the other, "has been seen off the heights of Callao. No doubt she will land at the mouth of the Rimac, and our boats should be there to disembark her cargo. Come, you must!"

"I know my own duty," said Martin.

"We speak to you here in Sambo's name."

"Yes," said Martin, "and I answer you in my own."

"'How shall we account for your being here in San Lazaro at this extraordinary hour of the night?"

"I go where I please," was the only answer.

"In front of the Jew's house, too!"

"Such of my brethren as are offended at it may meet me, and tell me of it this very night upon the hills."

The eyes of the three men flashed, but no more was said. The two retreated towards the bank of the Rimac, and the sound of their footsteps was soon lost in the distance.

Martin Paz had come quite alone to the residence of the Jew. Like all the houses in Lima it was only two stories high. The basement was built of bricks, and upon this was raised another story composed of plaited canes, plastered over and painted to match the walls below. This is a contrivance which is best adapted to resist the convulsions of the frequent earthquakes. The roof was flat, and being covered with flowers, it made a most fragrant and agreeable resort.

A broad gateway between two lodges gave access to a courtyard within, but according to the custom of the place, those lodges had no windows opening into the road.

The church clock had struck eleven, and there was the deepest silence all around. And why is it that the Indian lingers here before the walls? Only because a dim shadow has been seen moving amidst those flowers, of which night

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only hides the form, without depriving them of their delightful odors.

With an involuntary impulse Martin lifts his hands in ardent admiration. The dim figure starts and shrinks away as if in terror. Martin Paz withdraws his gaze from the roof to find himself face to face with André Certa.

"And for how long have the Indians been accustomed to pass their nights thus?" asked André, hot with rage.

"Ever since Indians have trodden the soil of their ancestors," sternly answered Martin Paz, without moving an inch. André advanced towards him.

"Wretch!" he angrily exclaimed, "will you not leave the place?"

"No!" cried Martin Paz, and in an instant daggers flashed in the right hands of both. They were of equal height, and seemed of equal strength. Quickly André raised his arm, but still more quickly it dropped; his poignard had met that of his antagonist, and he fell to the ground wounded in the shoulder.

"Help, help!" he shouted.

The gate of the Jew's house was quickly opened. Some half-breeds ran out hastily from an adjacent building; a part of them set out in pursuit of the Indian, who had at once made off, while the others attended the wounded man.

"Who is he?" asked a bystander. "If he is a sailor, he had better be carried off to the Hospital of St. Esprit; if he is an Indian, let him be taken to St. Anne's."

But at this point an old man approached, and having given a glance at the wounded André, said, "Take him into my house!" and then muttered to himself, "what strange piece of business is this?"

It was Samuel the Jew, who had thus recognized in the wounded man the intended husband of his daughter.

Meanwhile Martin Paz, favored by the darkness of the night and by his own fleetness, succeeded in escaping the hot pursuit of those who followed him. He was flying for his life. Could he only reach the open country, he would be safe; but the gates of the town, which were closed every night at eleven, would not be opened until four.

He reached the bridge, which he had crossed not long before. The half-breeds, with some soldiers who had joined them, pressed him closely from behind; an armed

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guard made its appearance right in front. Martin, unable either to advance or to retreat, bounded over the parapet, and leaped into the rapid stream that was dashing along its rocky bed. The soldiers rushed to the bank below the bridge to catch the fugitive as he reached the shore; but their effort was in vain. Martin Paz was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER III
THE JEW'S ANGER

ONCE safely lodged in the house of Samuel, and placed upon a couch that was quickly prepared for him, André Certa recovered his consciousness, and grasped the hand of the Jew. The surgeon who had been summoned was soon in attendance, and pronounced the wound to be unimportant, the shoulder having received the blow in such a way that the poignard had merely made a flesh wound; and there was no doubt that in a few days André would be convalescent.

When André found himself alone with Samuel he said to him, "I think you ought to block up the doorway that leads up to the terrace on the roof."

"Why?" rejoined the Jew. "What is there to be afraid of?"

"I don't think," continued André, "that it is right for Sarah to expose herself to the gaze of those Indians. It was from no burglar, it was simply from a rival that I received the cut that might have caused me serious injury: it was only by a miracle that I escaped."

"Ah! by the holy Bible!" shrieked the Jew, "you must be mistaken. My daughter will make you an accomplished wife, and I have always taken care that she shall do nothing that will damage your reputation."

André Certa lifted himself on to his elbow, and said significantly, "Are you not rather forgetting that I am to pay for Sarah's hand the price of no less than a hundred thousand piastres?"

"By no means," said the Jew with a greedy grin, "and I am quite ready to give you a receipt when I get the hard cash." And as he spoke he took from his portfolio a paper, of which André took no notice.

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"There will be no bargain between us, Master Samuel, until Sarah becomes my wife; and that she won't be, if there is to be any difficulty about a rival. You know my object; I want to be a match for those haughty aristocrats, who now treat me with such vile contempt."

"And that is in your reach, André. Once married you will find the haughtiest Spaniards coming to your receptions."

"Where has your daughter been this evening?" asked André.

"To the synagogue with old Ammon, her companion."

"Why do you make your daughter attend those services?" said André. "What good can they be to her?"

"I am a Jew," replied the father, "and Sarah would not be my daughter if she did not fulfil the offices of our religion."

A villainous rascal was Samuel the Jew. Trading in commodities of any kind, however questionable, he was worthy to be a direct descendant of the Iscariot who betrayed his Master for thirty silver shekels. He had settled in Lima some ten years previously. Equally to please his taste and to serve his interests he had chosen a residence on the outskirts of the suburb of San Lazaro, where he applied himself to the most unscrupulous practices. Gradually his home assumed more and more of luxury, till at length he had a mansion sumptuous in its furniture, a numerous retinue of servants, and such splendid equipages as only belonged to men of unbounded affluence.

When Samuel first took up his abode in Lima his daughter was eight years of age. Already graceful and captivating in her manner, she was the very idol of the Jew. Her beauty increased with her age, and attracted universal admiration, and before long it was generally understood that André Certa, the rich half-breed, was desperately smitten with her; what would have appeared inexplicable was that the sum of a hundred thousand piastres should be the price of Sarah's hand, but that part of the contract was a secret. Besides, it was a part of old Samuel's nature to make a profit out of sentimental emotions just as though they were marketable products. Banker, usurer, broker, and shipowner, he had a faculty for doing business with everyone who came in his way. The schooner *Annunciation*, which

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that very night was seeking to land at the mouth of the Rimac, was his property.

Eagerly devoted as he was to the transactions of business, this man, with the persistence of his race, found time to fulfil the religious offices of his creed with the most punctilious regularity, and his daughter had been strictly trained in the same faith; consequently, after André, in the course of their conversation, had let it be seen how much the fact displeased him, the old man sat for a time pensive and silent. André at length broke the silence.

"You must be aware," he said, "that the motive under which I contemplate marrying your daughter will compel her to become a Catholic."

"True," answered Samuel in a mournful tone, "but, by the holy Bible, as sure as Sarah is my daughter, Sarah will be a Jewess still!"

At this moment the door was opened, and the steward of the household entered.

"Has the assassin been arrested?" asked the Jew.

"We believe him dead," replied the steward.

"Dead!" exclaimed André, with a gesture of delight.

"So 'tis thought; he found himself upon the bridge with us pursuing him from behind, and a guard of soldiers just in front, and in order to escape, he jumped over the parapet and flung himself into the stream."

"But what makes you think that he did not reach one of the banks?" asked Samuel.

"Because the melting of the snow has swollen the stream into a torrent," replied the steward. "Besides, we hurried to each side of the river, but the man was never seen. The sentinels have been left to watch the banks."

"Well," said the old man, "if he is drowned, he has only executed just sentence upon himself. But did you recognize who he was?"

"Yes, it was Martin Paz, the Indian of the mountains."

"You mean the man who has now been so long watching my daughter?"

"Of that I know nothing," said the servant indifferently.

The Jew then desired that Ammon, the old duenna, should be sent to him, and the steward retired.

"Strange!" exclaimed the old man. "These Indians have so many secret conspiracies; it ought to be known

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how long this fellow has been carrying on his game."

By this time the duenna had entered the room, and stood waiting her master's pleasure.

"Does my daughter know anything of what has occurred to-night?" he inquired.

"I only know," was Ammon's reply, "that when I was roused by the clamor in the house, I hurried to the señora's room, and found her motionless with fright."

"Go on," he said impatiently, "tell me all."

"I pressed her to tell me the cause of her alarm; but she could not be induced to speak, and insisted upon going to bed; she would not allow me to attend her, and I was obliged to leave her to herself."

"This Indian, do you often meet him?"

"I can hardly say often," she replied, "but I must acknowledge that I know him very well by sight about the streets of San Lazaro, and this very evening he came to the señora's assistance in the Plaza Mayor."

"To her assistance! what do you mean?"

After the duenna had detailed the incident, the old Jew muttered wrathfully, "Is it true, then, that Sarah wanted to kneel down amongst those hateful Christians?" And then raising his voice, he threatened that Ammon should quit his service.

"Oh! forgive me, master, forgive me," was her deprecating cry.

"Out of my sight!" shouted Samuel harshly, and the duenna retreated in abashed confusion.

"There is no time to lose, you see," said André Certa, "it is high time that this marriage of ours should come off. But I want rest now, and shall be glad to be left alone."

The old man slowly retired; but before going to his own bed he wished to satisfy himself about the condition of his daughter, and accordingly he entered her apartment as gently as he could.

Sarah was sleeping very restlessly on a bed that was hung round with the richest of silk draperies. An elaborate lamp hung from the decorated boss upon the ceiling, and threw a soft light upon her face, whilst the window was opened just enough to admit the delicious perfume of the aloes and magnolias that were planted outside. With lavish luxury and consummate taste, articles of precious value

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were arranged about the chamber, and it might have been imagined that the mind of the sleeper was reveling amidst their beauties.

Her father came close to her side and bent down to watch her slumber. She was evidently agitated by some painful dream, and once the name of Martin Paz escaped her lips. The old man went to his room.

At break of day Sarah arose in eager haste. She summoned Liberta, an Indian attached to her service, and bade him saddle a horse for himself and a mule for her.

It was no long task for her to array herself in such a toilette as suited her design. A broad-brimmed hat, and her loosely-flowing tresses of black hair sheltered her face from observation, and the better to conceal the thoughts by which she was preoccupied, she placed a small perfumed cigarette between her lips.

She was no sooner mounted than she started off with her attendant across the country in the direction of Callao. The harbor was all alive with excitement, the coastguards having had to keep watch all night long upon the schooner, whose uncertain tackings indicated a fraudulent design. At one moment it would seem as though the vessel was waiting near the river's mouth for some suspicious-looking boats; but before they came alongside she was off again to avoid the long-boats belonging to the harbor. Many were the surmises about her destination. Some said that she had brought a body of Colombian troops, and intended to take possession of Callao, and to avenge the insult offered to the Bolivian soldiers who had been ignominiously expelled from Peru. Others maintained that she was merely a schooner driving a contraband trade in European wool.

To Sarah these speculations were all indifferent. She had only come to the port as a pretext, and now returned to Lima, which she reached at the point nearest to the river. Following the banks of the stream she went as far as the bridge, whence she noticed the groups of soldiers and half-breeds gathered along shore.

Liberta had made the girl acquainted with the events of the night. In obedience to her orders he now inquired further particulars from some of the soldiers, and learnt that although Martin Paz was doubtless drowned, his body had not yet been recovered.

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Ready to faint, Sarah had to gather up all her strength of mind to avoid giving way to bitter grief. Amongst the people who were wandering up and down the bank she caught sight of a wild-looking Indian, whom she immediately recognized as Sambo. Passing close beside him, she heard him mournfully exclaim, "Alas! alas! they have killed the son of Sambo! My son is dead!"

The girl presently recovered her self-possession, and making a sign to Liberta to follow her, and not troubling herself as to whether she was observed or not, she directed her way to the church of St. Anne, and having left her mule in Liberta's care, she entered the Catholic house of prayer, and after she had asked for Father Joachim, she knelt upon the flagstones and prayed for the soul of Martin Paz.

CHAPTER IV

THE MARQUIS DON VEGAL

EXCEPTING Martin Paz there was scarcely another man in all the world to whom the torrent of the Rimac would not have proved a sure destruction. But his strength of body was amazing, and his strength of will resistless; and he was, moreover, greatly aided by that imperturbable *sang froid* which is characteristic of the free Indians of the New World.

Knowing intuitively that the soldiers would reckon on capturing him below the bridge, where the stream was too powerful to be combated, he put forth all his energy, and succeeded in stemming the torrent the other way. He found the resistance less in the side-currents, and contrived to reach the bank, where he concealed himself behind a cluster of mangroves.

But what would happen next? Soon the soldiers would change their tactics and explore the river upwards; and then what would be his chance of escape? His determination was soon taken; he would re-enter the town and find a refuge there.

To elude the observation of any of the residents who might be out late, it would perhaps have been best to take the wider streets. But he could not resist the impression that he was watched, and he dared not hesitate. All at once he caught sight of a house still brilliantly lighted up; the

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gateway was open to allow the carriages to pass out, and the very *élite* of the Spanish aristocracy were thence returning to their own homes.

Without being seen he entered the house, and the gates were almost immediately closed behind him. He hurried on, ascending a cedar staircase adorned with costliest tapestry, and after passing through apartments still brilliantly illuminated, but absolutely empty, he found a place of concealment in a dark chamber beyond.

Before long the lamps were all extinguished, and silence reigned throughout the house. Martin ventured from his hiding-place to reconnoiter the situation. He found that the window of the room opened on to a garden below; escape seemed to him to be quite practicable, and he was on the point of leaping down when he was startled by a voice behind him: "Stop, señor, you have forgotten to take the diamonds that I left on the table."

He looked back. There stood a haughty-looking man pointing to a jewel case that lay before him.

Thus assailed, Martin approached the Spaniard, who was still standing without moving a muscle, and drawing a dagger, which he pointed towards his own heart, he said, with a voice trembling with agitation, "Repeat your words, and you find me dead at your feet!"

Dumb with amazement, the Spaniard gazed steadily at the Indian, and felt an involuntary sympathy rising up within him. He went to the window and shut it gently; then, turning to the Indian, who had let his dagger fall to the ground, he asked him who he was, and whence he had come.

"I am Martin Paz. I was escaping the pursuit of the soldiers. I had wounded a half-breed with my dagger. I was defending myself. The man I struck is betrothed to the girl I love. It rests with you to save me, or to surrender me, as you think best."

The Spaniard stood in silent thought. After a while he said, "To-morrow I am going to the baths of Chorillos. If it will answer your purpose, go with me. For a time, at least, you will be safe, and you will not have to complain of any lack of hospitality from the Marquis Don Vegal."

Martin Paz bent his head in tacit assent.

"But now," continued Don Vegal, "you had better take

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a few hours' rest. No one in the world will suspect your hiding place."

The Spaniard retired to his own apartment. Martin was deeply touched by the generosity with which he had met, and, relying on the good faith of the marquis, resigned himself to a peaceful slumber.

Next morning, at daybreak, the marquis gave his orders for starting, but previously arranged to have an interview with Samuel the Jew. First of all, however, he went to the early morning mass. The Peruvian aristocracy were always constant in their attendance at this service. From its earliest foundation Lima had always been pre-eminently Catholic. Besides its numerous churches, it counted at that time no less than twenty-two convents, seventeen monasteries, and four *pensions* for ladies who had not actually taken the veil. To each of these separate establishments was attached its own chapel, so that altogether there could not be less than a hundred places of worship, in which about eight hundred secular and regular priests, and three hundred nuns, besides lay brotherhoods and sisterhoods, devoted themselves to the offices of religion.

As he entered St. Anne's the eye of the marquis was attracted by the kneeling figure of a girl, who was weeping as she prayed. So great was her agitation, that he could not repress his sympathy, and was about to address her in some words of kind encouragement, when Father Joachim whispered, "Do not disturb her, marquis, I pray you!"

And then he beckoned to the girl, who followed him into a dim and empty chapel. Don Vegal made his way to the altar and attended mass, but could not dismiss from his memory the image of the girl who had so strangely arrested his attention.

Upon his return home he found Samuel the Jew awaiting his commands. Samuel seemed to have entirely forgotten the incidents of the past night; the prospect of gain had made him quite oblivious of all besides, and gave a keen vivacity to the expression of his face. "I await your lordship's commands," he said.

"I must have thirty thousand piastres within an hour."

"Thirty thousand!" cried the Jew. "How is it possible? By our holy David, I should have more difficulty in finding them than you seem to think."

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Without taking any notice of what the usurer was saying, the marquis explained that, besides his valuable cases of jewels, he had a piece of land near Cusco that he would sell at a price far below its real value.

"Land!" exclaimed Samuel. "Why, it's land that ruins us! We can't get any labor to till the land since the Indians have withdrawn to the mountains. Land! why, its produce does not pay its expenses!"

"But, tell me," said the marquis, "at how much do you value the diamonds alone?"

The old man drew from his pocket a small pair of jeweler's scales, and proceeded to weigh the gems with an air of minute precision, at the same time, according to his habit, keeping up a running current of depreciation.

"Diamonds! yes, they are diamonds; but see how badly set! One might as well bury his money in the ground. Look here! what a stone! no purity about it. I can assure your lordship that I shall find it very difficult to get a customer at all for this costly purchase. Perhaps if I send them to the States, the Northerners will buy them in order to get rid of them to some English purchaser. No doubt they will make a good profit out of them, but then the loss would all fall upon me. Upon my word, your lordship, you must be satisfied with ten thousand piastres. It seems a little, but——"

"I have already told you that ten thousand piastres are of no use to me," said the marquis, with an air of profound contempt.

"Not one half-real more. I could not afford it," rejoined the inflexible Jew.

"Then take the caskets; only let me have the sum I ask, and give it me at once. Thirty thousand I must have, and you shall have a bond upon this house of mine. Substantial, is it not?"

"Ah, your lordship, but there are so many earthquakes here. One never knows who may be alive and who may be dead from one moment to another, nor yet which houses may stand, or which may fall."

And all the time the Jew was talking he kept stamping with his foot upon the inlaid floor, as if to test its real stability. He paused for an instant, and then resumed, "However, to oblige your lordship, it shall be as you wish; al-

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though just now I am indisposed to part with ready cash, as I am marrying my daughter to the young squire, André Certa. Do you know him?"

"Not at all. But lose no time: our bargain is made. Take the caskets, and give me the gold."

"Would your lordship wish for a receipt?" asked Samuel.

The marquis condescended to give no reply, and left the room.

"Arrogant Spaniard!" muttered the Jew, and gnashed his teeth in wrath. "Would that I could crush your pride as I can ruin your estate! By Solomon! 'tis clever practice to make one's interests and one's wishes agree so well."

After leaving the Jew, the marquis had gone to Martin Paz. He found him in a state of the gloomiest dejection.

"Well! how now?" he said kindly.

"Ah, señor! the daughter of that Jew is the girl I love."

"A Jewess!" exclaimed the marquis, in a tone of abhorrence which he could ill disguise; but compassionating the sorrow of the Indian, he only said, "Now then, it is time to start; we will talk about these things as we go along."

Within an hour Martin Paz, after changing his clothes, left the town in company with the Marquis Don Vegal, who took no other attendants.

The sea-baths of Chorillos are two leagues distant from Lima. It is a parish inhabited by Indians, and has a pretty church. During the warm season it is a favorite resort of all the *élite* of Lima, for the public gaming-tables, which are forbidden in the city, are here kept open throughout the summer. The ladies especially show a remarkable enthusiasm for this amusement, and during the season many a wealthy knight has seen his large fortune pass away into the hands of his fair opponents.

Just at that time Chorillos was almost deserted, and Don Vegal and Martin Paz, in their retired cottage on the seashore, were free to contemplate in peaceful solitude the wide expanse of the Pacific.

The Marquis Don Vegal, a scion of one of the most ancient Spanish families in Peru, was the only surviving representative of that noble lineage of which he was so justly proud. Traces of the deepest melancholy were ever visible

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on his countenance, and although, during a considerable portion of his life, he had been engaged in political affairs, the perpetual revolutions, instigated as they had been by motives of mere personal aggrandizement, so disgusted him with the outer world, that he withdrew from it altogether, and passed his time in a seclusion from which only matters of the strictest etiquette could ever induce him to emerge.

Little by little his fortune, once so immense, was dwindling away; he could with difficulty obtain credit for advances of capital, so that not only had his estates fallen into a condition of great neglect, but he had been obliged to mortgage them very heavily. The prospect of ultimate ruin stared him in the face, but in spite of the hopeless aspect of his affairs he never flinched for a moment. The heedlessness, characteristic of the Spanish race, together with the weariness induced by his objectless life, combined to make him utterly indifferent to the future. He had no domestic ties to bind him to the world; a beloved wife and charming little daughter, the sole objects of his affection, had been snatched from him by a melancholy fate; and he was contented passively to take his chance and await the chapter of events.

But cold and deadened as he had deemed his heart to be, his contact with Martin Paz had done something to awaken him from his habitual lethargy. The fiery temperament of the Indian did something towards rekindling the smouldering ashes of the Spaniard's sensitiveness. The marquis was worn out by his association with his fellow-countrymen, in whom he had no confidence; he was disgusted with the insolent half-breeds who were ever encroaching upon the prerogatives of his own order; and so he seemed to turn for relief to that primitive race which had fought so valiantly to defend its soil against the soldiers of Pizarro.

According to the information which the marquis received, it was currently reported that the Indian was dead. Worse than death, however, it appeared to Don Vegal that Martin Paz should ally himself in matrimony to a Jewess, and accordingly he resolved to rescue him doubly by allowing the daughter of Samuel to be married without interference to André Certa. He could not do otherwise than observe the depression which weighed upon Martin, and he hoped to divert him from his melancholy by avoiding the topic en-

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tirely, and by calling his attention to indifferent matters.

One day, however, distressed at noticing the saddened preoccupation of his guest, he could not resist asking him, "How is it that the innate nobility of your nature does not revolt against what must be so deep a degradation? Remember your ancestor, the redoubtable Manco-Capac; his patriotism exalted him to the highest rank of heroes, and no one with a noble part to play should condescend to an ignoble passion. Do you not burn to regain the independence of your soil?"

"Ah, señor," said the Indian, "we never lose sight of that glorious enterprise, and the day is not far off when my brethren will rise *en masse* to accomplish it!"

"I understand to what you refer," replied the marquis; "you are thinking of that secret war which you are planning in the retirement of the mountains; you are going to descend in full array, and at a concerted signal pounce upon the town below. Yes, you may come, but you will come, as you have always come, only to be vanquished. You have not the faintest chance of making good your hold amidst the continual revolutions of which Peru must be the scene,—revolutions which elevate the half-breeds to the detriment alike of Indians and of Spaniards."

"Nay, but we will save our country!" was Martin's eager remonstrance.

"Save it? yes, you may; if only you comprehend your proper part. But listen to me for a moment. I would speak to you as tenderly as though you were my son. I tell you, although I own it with the deepest sorrow, that we Spaniards are degenerate sons of a once powerful race: our energy is gone, and we entirely lack the vigor to regain the supremacy we have lost. But it rests with you to prevail; and prevail you can if you will only crush the mischievous spirit of Americanism which is refusing to tolerate the settlement of foreigners as colonists amongst us. Be sure of this: there is only one policy that can save the old Peruvian Empire; you must have a European immigration. The intestine war which you are contemplating can effect no good at all; it will only trample out every grade but the one you want to extinguish. Nothing can be done except you frankly stretch out the hand of welcome to the laboring population of the Old World."

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"Indians, señor," replied Martin Paz, "must ever be the sworn foes of strangers, let them come whence they will. Indians will never tolerate the claims of foreigners to plant their footsteps upon their soil or to breathe their mountain air. My control over them is of such a character that it would not last a moment longer than I should denounce death to every oppressor of their liberty. It must be borne in mind, too," he continued, in a tone of mournful despondency, "that I am myself a fugitive with not three hours to live if I were to venture into the streets of Lima."

"Lima!" exclaimed the marquis, "you must promise me at least that you will not trust yourself in Lima!"

"Were I to pledge myself to that," said Martin, "I should be disguising the true intention of my heart."

Don Vegal sat and mused in silence. There was no room to doubt that the Indian's passion was growing more intense from day to day, and the marquis knew that if he should presume to enter Lima he would to a certainty be exposing himself to an immediate death. What could he do but resolve by any and all means at his command to hurry on the marriage of the young Jewess to André Certa.

To convince himself of the true state of affairs the marquis rose betimes one morning and made his way from Chorillos back into the town. He was there informed that André Certa had so far recovered from his wound that he was about again, and that his approaching marriage was the subject of general gossip.

Desirous of seeing the maiden who had so completely captivated Martin Paz, the Marquis Don Vegal directed his steps towards the Plaza Mayor at the evening hour, when the throng was invariably very great, and on his way encountered his old friend, Father Joachim. The monk was extremely astonished at being informed that Martin Paz was still alive, and nothing could exceed the eagerness with which he undertook to keep a watch on behalf of the young Indian, and to acquaint the marquis with any intelligence which might be of interest to him.

While the two were conversing, the attention of the marquis was arrested by a young girl enveloped in a black mantle, who was reclining on the low seat of a barouche.

"Who is that handsome young lady?" he inquired of Father Joachim.

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"That is old Samuel's daughter, the girl who is on the point of marrying André Certa," said the monk.

"*That* the daughter of a Jew!" involuntarily exclaimed Don Vegal; but he restrained further expression of his astonishment, shook hands with his friend, and retraced his way to Chorillos.

His surprise bewildered him still more when he came to consider that perchance she was not really a Jewess; he had recognized her as the girl whom he had seen kneeling in prayer within the Church of St. Anne.

CHAPTER V

THE PLOT BETRAYED

All this time, however, a very unusual agitation was going on amongst the Indians; those of them who resided in the town keeping up a vigorous communication with those who habitually made their homes amongst the mountains. They seemed for a time to have shaken off the dullness of their native apathy. No longer lounging wrapped in their ponchos and basking in the sunshine, they were ever and again hurrying to and fro in the direction of the open country; they greeted one another significantly as they met; they were ever making mysterious signs of mutual recognition, and continually held their meetings in out-of-the-way, second-rate hotels, where they could carry on their conferences without any risk of being observed.

This unusual commotion was for the most part obvious in one of the loneliest quarters of the town. At the corner of a street there was a dejected tenement, only one story high, the miserable appearance of which could not fail to attract observation. It was a kind of tap-room, of the lowest description, kept by an old Indian woman, who found her customers entirely among the most abject of the poor, who bought her beer made from fermented maize, or, failing that, contented themselves with a decoction of sugar-canes.

It was only at certain hours that there was any gathering of Indians at that spot, the signal of meeting being a long pole displayed on the roof of the building. But whenever notice was given there was soon a motley assemblage of

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the lowest class of the natives; there were cabriolet-drivers, muleteers, and carmen hurrying to the place of rendezvous, without loitering for a moment outside. The hostess was all on the alert, and, leaving the care of her counter to the charge of a servant-maid, hastened herself to give her best attention to her habitual guests.

A few days after the disappearance of Martin Paz there was a concourse larger than usual collected in the large room of the inn. The apartment was dim with clouds of tobacco-smoke, and it was with much difficulty that any-one of the *habitués* of the place could be distinguished from another. Altogether there were about fifty Indians congregated around the long table, some of whom were chewing a kind of tea-leaf mixed with a morsel of fragrant earth, while others were drinking fermented liquor from huge cans; but none of them seemed so much absorbed in their own doings as to prevent them from attending to the speech in which an old Indian was addressing them.

This Indian was no other than Sambo, and the whole assembly appeared to be following him with an eager interest. He looked with a keen scrutiny round the circle of his audience, and, after a brief pause, continued his appeal.

"The Children of the Sun can now discuss their own affairs quite unmolested. No perfidious spy can overhear them here. All round about are friends who, disguised as wandering street-singers, attract the passers-by, and prevent all interruption, so that now we may enjoy an uncontrolled and ample liberty.

And while he spoke the notes of a mandolin were heard thrumming in the thoroughfare hard by. Certified as to their security, the whole gathering of Indians prepared to pay a yet closer attention to the words of Sambo, who manifestly enjoyed their largest confidence. One of the party, however, interrupted him by asking abruptly: "Can Sambo give us any tidings of Martin Paz?"

"None whatever," he replied; "nor can I tell you whether he is alive or dead: the Great Spirit alone knows that. But I am expecting some of our brethren back who have been exploring the river down to its very mouth, and they perchance will have something to relate about the lost body of your chief."

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"Ay, he might be a good leader," said an Indian named Manangani, with the fierce, bold manner that belonged to him; "but why was he wanting in his duty, and absent from his post on the very night that the schooner arrived with our arms?"

The question elicited no reply. Sambo hung his head in silence.

"Are our brethren aware," continued Manangani, "that there was an exchange of shots that night between the schooner and the coastguards, and do they know that the capture of the *Annunciation* would have been fatal to our enterprise?"

A murmur of assent ran through the assembly.

Sambo now took up the conversation, saying that all who would wait to judge the matter would be welcome.

"And who knows," he said, "whether my son shall not some day reappear? Be patient still. Even now the arms which we received from Sechura are in our keeping; safe they are in the mountain recesses of the Cordilleras, and ready to fullfil their work when you are prepared to do your duty."

"And what shall hinder us?" exclaimed a young Indian; "our weapons are sharpened, and we only bide our time."

"The hour will come," said Sambo; "but do our brethren know on whom the blow ought first to fall?"

The voice of one of the party was heard protesting that the first to perish ought to be the half-breeds who had treated them so insolently, chastising them like restive mules.

"Not so," declared another; "the first that we should strike should be the appropriators of the soil we tread."

"Mistaken are ye altogether!" shouted Sambo, with a voice raised in eagerness. "You must let your blows fall first in another quarter. It is not those of whom you speak that have dared for three centuries to plant their foot upon our ancestral soil; rich as they are, it is not they who have dragged the descendants of Manco-Capac to the tomb. No; rather 'tis the haughty Spaniards who are the true conquerors, and who have reduced you to the condition of being their very slaves. Their riches may have gone, but their authority survives, and they it is who, in spite of any emancipation that should give liberty to Peru, still trample

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our natural rights beneath their feet. Let us forget what we are, just that for once we may remember what our fathers were."

"True! true!" was the shout that burst forth from many a voice in the excited company.

Then ensued a few moments of silent consideration, when Sambo proceeded to make inquiries of some of the conspirators and to satisfy himself that their allies in Cusco and throughout Bolivia were ready to rise as one man.

His enthusiasm soon again broke out in speech. "And our brethren on the mountains, brave Manangani, only let them cherish in their souls a hatred such as yours, and arm themselves with your courage, too, and they shall fall upon Lima as an avalanche might come crashing down from the Cordilleras."

"Sambo shall not need to complain," said Manangani; "their firmness will not fail them at the proper time. Go but a few yards beyond the town and you shall find groups of eager Indians fired with the passion of revenge. In the gorges of San Cristoval and the Amancäes many a one beneath his poncho wears his poignard hanging in his belt, and only waits to have the rifle trusted to his hand. Never will they forget to exact the vengeance that is due from the Spaniards for their defeat of Manco-Capac."

"Good!" replied Sambo; "it is the God of hatred that inspires your lips. My brethren shall soon know what their chiefs have decided. All that Gambarra wants now is to consolidate his power; Bolivar has retired; Santa Cruz has been chased away, and we can act in perfect safety. Wait but a few days and our adversaries will be taking their pleasure at the coming festival of the Amancäes. Then will be our time; then must we set ourselves in motion, and the summons must be heard even to the remotest village of Bolivia."

Three Indians at this moment entered the room. Sambo received them with the eager inquiry:

"Well, what news? Is he found?"

"No," replied one of the three; "the body is nowhere to be found. Though we have searched every foot of the river bank, and sent the most skillful of our divers down to search the depths, we find no trace of Sambo's son. Doubtless he has perished in the waters of the Rimac."

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"Have they then killed him? Is he lost? Woe, woe to them if they have slain my son!" Then, repressing his passion, he added, "Let my brothers now go quietly away. Go ye away to your place, but be on your guard and ready for the call."

All the Indians gradually took their departure, leaving Sambo and Manangani alone behind.

"Do you know," asked Manangani, "what was the motive that took your son that night to the quarter of San Lazaro? Are you sure of him?"

"Sure of him!" said Sambo, re-echoing the words, with a flash of indignant wrath in his eyes beneath which Manangani involuntarily recoiled, "sure of him! If Martin Paz should be a traitor to his friends, I would first slay every soul to whom he had given his friendship; nay, I would not spare them to whom he had yielded his dearest love; and then I would kill him; and, last of all, I would kill myself. Perish everything beneath the sun rather than dishonor shall befall our race."

His fervid speech was interrupted by the hostess bringing in a letter addressed to him.

"Who gave you this?" he asked.

"I cannot tell," replied the woman; "it was left, apparently by design, as if forgotten by one of the men who have been drinking at one of the tables."

"Have any but Indians been in here?" he inquired.

"None whatever but Indians," was her prompt reply.

As soon as the woman had gone he unfolded the document and read it aloud: "A young girl has been praying for Martin Paz. She cannot forget one who has imperiled his life for the sake of hers. Has Sambo any tidings of his son? If he has news of him, let him bind a scarlet band around his arm. There are eyes ever on the watch to see him pass."

Crumpling up the paper, he exclaimed: "Unhappy fool! to be entangled by the fascinations of a pretty girl!"

"Who is she?" inquired Manangani.

"No Indian maid," said Sambo, "some dainty damsel full of airs. Ah, Martin Paz, you are beside yourself! I know you not!"

"Do you mean to do what the woman asks?"

"No!" said the Indian vehemently, "let her abandon

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all hope of setting eyes upon my son again, and let her die in ignorance!" And while he spoke he angrily tore the paper into fragments.

"It must have been an Indian who brought the letter," observed Manangani.

"Not one of our party. It is known well enough that I am often here, but I shall not come again. Now do you return to the mountains. I will keep watch in the town. The feast day comes, and we shall see whether it be a festival of rejoicing for the oppressors or the oppressed." With this parting direction the two Indians each departed on his own way.

The plot of the Indians had been deeply laid, and the time for its execution was adroitly chosen. The population of Peru was reduced to a comparatively small number of Spaniards and half-breeds. From the forests of Brazil, from the mountains of Chili, from the plains of La Plata, the hordes of Indians had been summoned, and would find it an easy task to cover the whole territory which was to be the theater of revolution. Once let the larger towns, Lima, Cusco, and Puno, fall into their hands, and victory was all their own. There was no fear of the Colombian troops, who had recently been driven out by the Peruvian government, returning to assist their adversaries in the hour of their necessity.

And it can hardly be doubted that this revolutionary movement would have resulted in entire success if its intention had been confided to none but Indian breasts: among them there was no fear of treachery.

But they knew not that there was a man who already had obtained a private audience with Gambarra, and had apprized him that the schooner *Annunciation* had been unlading firearms of every description into the canoes and pirogues of the Indians at the mouth of the Rimac; they knew not that that man had gone to claim a reward from the Peruvian Government for the very service of exposing their own proceedings.

A double game was this. The man who for a large payment had chartered his ship to Sambo for the conveyance of the arms, had gone at once to the president and betrayed the existence of the conspiracy.

The man was Samuel the Jew.

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CHAPTER VI
THE JEW'S SECRET

As soon as he was restored to health, André Certa, still believing in the death of Martin Paz, began to hurry on his marriage. His intended bride continued to regard him with the most complete indifference; but this did not occasion him any concern; he regarded her solely as a costly article for which he had to pay the handsome price of 100,000 piastres.

It must be alleged that André had no confidence at all in the Jew, and he was right in entertaining mistrust. If the contract had been void of honesty, so were the contractors void of principle. Accordingly André was now anxious for a private interview with Samuel, and for that purpose took him for a day to Chorillos, where he also hoped to have the chance of trying a little gambling before his marriage.

The gaming-tables had been opened at the baths a few days after the marquis's arrival, and ever since they had been the means of keeping up an incessant traffic along the road to Lima. Some came on foot, who returned with the luxury of a carriage; while others came only fairly to exhaust the remnant of a shattered fortune.

Neither Don Vegal nor Martin Paz took any share in the play; the restlessness of the young Indian was caused by a far nobler game. After their evening walks Martin would take leave of the marquis, and, going to his own room, would lounge with his elbows on the window-sill, and spend hours in silent reverie.

The marquis ever and again recalled to his recollection the young girl whom he had seen praying in the Catholic church, but he did not venture to entrust the secret to his guest, although he took occasion little by little to acquaint him with the essentials of the Christian faith. He hesitated to allude to the girl, because he was fearful of reviving the very interest that he was anxious to allay. It was necessary that the Indian should renounce every hope of obtaining the hand of Sarah. Only let the police, he thought, abandon their search for Martin, and his protector did not doubt that in the course of time he could procure him an introduction into the first circle of Peruvian society.

But Martin Paz would not surrender himself to despair

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without assuring himself of the hopelessness of his chance. He resolved at all risks to know the actual destiny of the young Jewess. Screened from suspicion by his Spanish attire, he thought he might enter into the gambling-halls, and so hear the conversation of those who habitually frequented them. André Certa was a person of sufficient note to make his marriage, as it drew near, a topic of considerable talk.

One evening, therefore, instead of turning his steps towards the seashore, the Indian bent his way towards the high cliffs on which the principal houses in Chorillos were built, and entered a house that was approached by a large flight of stone steps. This was the gambling-house.

The day had been trying to more than one of the people of Lima. Some of them, worn out by the fatigue of the preceding night, were reposing on the ground, covered with their ponchos. The other gamblers were seated before a large table covered with green baize, and divided into four compartments by two lines that cut each other at right angles in the middle. Each of these compartments was marked with either the letter A., or the letter S., the initial letters of the Spanish words "asar," and "suerte," hazard and chance. The players put their money upon whichever of the letters they chose, a croupier held the stakes, and threw two dice upon the table, and the combined readings of the points determined whether A. or S. was the winner.

At this particular moment there was a general animation, and one half-breed could be noticed persevering against ill-luck with a feverish determination.

"Two thousand piastres!" he exclaimed.

The croupier shook the dice, and a muttered curse fell from the player's lips.

"Four thousand piastres!" he said.

But again he lost.

Protected by the shadows of the hall, Martin Paz caught a glimpse of the player's face. It was André Certa, and close beside him stood the Jew Samuel. "There," said Samuel, "that's play enough. The luck is all against you to-day."

"Curse the luck!" said André impetuously, "it does not matter to you."

The Jew whispered in the young man's ear: "It may

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not matter to me; but to you it matters much, and you should desist from the practice for the few days before your marriage."

"Eight thousand piastres!" was the only reply that André made, as he laid his stake upon the S.

"A. wins," was the immediate decision of the dice, and the half-breed's blaspheming oaths were hardly covered by the croupier's summons, "Make your game, gentlemen; make your game."

Taking a roll of notes from his pocket, André was on the point of hazarding a still larger sum; he was placing them on the table, and the croupier was already shaking his dice box.

The Jew bent his head again towards the ear of André, and said: "You will have nothing left to-night to close our bargain. Everything will then be broken off."

André shrugged his shoulders, and uttered an ejaculation of rage; but he took up the money he had staked, and went out of the room.

"You may go on now," said Samuel, addressing the croupier; "you may ruin that gentleman if you like, but not until after his marriage."

The croupier bowed obsequiously. The Jew was the originator and proprietor of the gaming-house. Wherever there was gold to be won, he was sure to be found.

Following the young half-breed out, he overtook him upon the stone steps, and telling him that he had matters of great importance to communicate to him, asked where they might converse in uninterrupted security.

"Where you please!" said André, with abrupt discourtesy.

"Let me advise you, señor," said Samuel, "not to let your bad temper interfere with your future advantage. My secret is not to be revealed within the best closed doors; no, nor yet in the most secluded wilderness. It is a secret for which you think you are paying me a good high price, but let me assure you it is well worth keeping."

While they were thus talking they came to the spot where the bathing-houses were erected; but they had no idea how they were being overlooked and overheard by Martin Paz, who had glided after them like a serpent.

"Let us take a boat," said André, "and put out to sea."

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He then loosened a light boat from its moorings on the shore, and flinging some money to its owner, he made Samuel get in, and pushed off into the open water.

No sooner did Martin Paz observe the boat leave the shore than, concealed by a projecting rock, he hastily undressed, and taking the precaution to fasten on his belt, to which he attached a poignard, he swam with all his strength in the same direction. By this time the sun had sunk below the horizon, and the obscurity of twilight enveloped both sea and sky.

One thing Martin had forgotten. He did not call to mind that the waters of these latitudes were infested with sharks of the most ferocious kind; but, plunging recklessly into the fatal flood, he made good his way till he was near enough to the boat just to catch the voices of the two as they spoke.

"But what proof am I to give the father of the girl's identity?" were the first words he heard André say.

"Proof! why, you must detail the circumstances under which he lost his child."

"What were the circumstances?" asked André.

"Listen, and you shall hear," replied the Jew.

Martin Paz could only by an effort keep his position within ear-shot of the boat, and what he heard he failed to comprehend.

The Jew proceeded to say: "It was in Chili, at Concepcion, that Sarah's father lived. He is a nobleman that you already know, and his wealth was according to his rank. He was obliged, by business of a pressing nature, to come to Lima. He came alone, leaving behind his wife and a little daughter only five months old. In every respect the climate of Peru was agreeable to him, and he sent for his lady to join him there. Bringing with her only a few trusty servants, she embarked on the *San José*, of Valparaiso. On that ship it chanced that I was myself a passenger. The *San José* was bound to put into harbor at Lima; but just off the point of Juan Fernandez she was exposed to a terrific hurricane, which disabled her, and laid her upon her beam-ends. The whole of the crew, and the passengers, betook themselves to the long-boat. The marchioness refused to enter the boat, but clasping her infant in her arms, resolved at all hazards to remain where

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she was. I remained with her. The long-boat made off, but before it had proceeded a hundred fathoms from the ship, it was swallowed up in the angry waters. The two of us remained alone. The storm came on with increasing fury. As I had not my property on board, I was not reduced to a condition of absolute despair. The *San José*, with five feet of water in her hold, drove upon the rocks and was dashed to pieces. The lady with her child was thrown into the sea. It was my fortune to be able to rescue the little girl, although I saw the mother perish before my eyes; and with the child in my arms, I contrived to reach the shore."

"Are these details all correct?" asked André.

"Yes, to the most minute particular. The father will not deny them. Ah! I did a good day's work when I earned that 100,000 piastres which you are going to pay me."

Perplexed beyond measure, Martin could not suppress the ejaculation, "What does all this mean?"

"Here," said André, "here is your money."

"Thanks!" replied Samuel, eagerly pocketing the cash, "and here is your receipt. I guarantee to return you twice the sum if you do not find yourself a member of one of the noblest Spanish families."

Martin Paz was more bewildered than ever. He could give no meaning to what he heard. The boat began to move in his direction, and he was about to dive below the water to elude observation when he saw a huge black mass rolling onwards towards him.

It was a tintorea, a shark of the most voracious kind.

Although the Indian dived immediately, he was soon obliged to come to the surface to take breath. As he rose he was struck by the tail of the shark, and felt the slimy scales against his breast. In order to grasp its prey, the animal, according to its habit, rolled over on its back, and displayed its monstrous jaw armed with its triple rows of teeth; but in an instant, Martin, catching a glimpse of its white belly, made a desperate effort, and plunged in his dagger to its very hilt.

The waves around him were all red with blood; he made another dive, and, rising about ten fathoms away, had entirely lost sight of the boat. A few more strokes, and he

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regained the shore, hardly conscious of the hairbreadth escape he had had from the most terrible of deaths.

Next day he was gone from Chorillos, and Don Vegal, harassed by misgivings, hurried with all speed to Lima, in the hope of finding him.

CHAPTER VII

THE BRIDE DISAPPEARS

QUITE an event was the approaching marriage of André Certa with the daughter of the affluent Jew. The ladies had no time for repose; the necessity of inventing new fashions and for preparing elaborate costumes to grace the occasion occupied every thought and taxed every resource.

The mansion of the Jew was especially the scene of bustle, as he was resolved to give a most sumptuous entertainment in honor of Sarah's wedding. The frescoes which decorated the walls in Spanish fashion were restored at a large expense; hangings of the most costly quality were hung at every window and over every door; handsome furniture, carved of fragrant wood, diffused a pleasant odor throughout the spacious rooms, while plants of the rarest and loveliest growth, the products of the most luxuriant regions of the tropics, adorned the balconies and terraces at every turn.

The maiden herself, however, was the victim of despair. Sambo had no longer any hope, otherwise he would have worn the red token on his arm. Her servant Liberta had been sent to keep a watch upon the old Indian, but he had been unable to discover anything.

Could the girl only have been free to follow the dictates of her heart she would not have hesitated an instant to have sought a refuge in the nearest convent, and to have made her vows for all her future life. Attracted as she was with the doctrines of the Catholics as they had been irresistibly expounded to her by the eloquence of Father Joachim, she would have surrendered herself with the most genuine of zeal to the influences of that faith which was winding itself so sympathetically around the longings of her heart.

The monk, anxious to avoid every suspicion of scandal, and being better read in his breviary than in the passions

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of human nature, allowed Sarah to believe in the death of Martin Paz. The girl's conversion seemed to him the matter of supreme importance, and presuming that this would be secured by her marriage with André, he tried to reconcile her to the union, without at all knowing the conditions under which it was concluded.

At length the day arrived, a day so full of congratulations to one party, so heavy in misgivings to the other. André Certa had issued his invitation to well-nigh the whole town, but had the mortification of finding that, under some pretext or other, all the superior families had excused themselves.

The hour struck at which the marriage contract had to be signed, and expectation rose to its height, when all became aware that the bride had not appeared.

The annoyance and alarm of the old Jew were intense. The frown that lowered on the brow of André Certa was the witness of mingled anger and amazement. Embarrassment seized every guest; and the whole scene was brought out in singular distinctness by the thousands of wax lights, whose rays were reflected from the countless mirrors.

Meanwhile, outside in the general thoroughfare, there was a man pacing up and down in a state of the wildest excitement. That man was the Marquis Don Vegal.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RESCUE

THROUGHOUT this period Sarah, a prey to the bitterest anguish, remained in the solitude of her own room. Nothing could induce her to quit it. Once, half stifled by her emotion, she sought relief by going to the balcony that overhung the garden below.

At that very instant she caught sight of a man wending his way through the groves of magnolias, and recognized her servant Liberta. To all appearance he was stealthily watching someone who did not see him. At one moment he was concealing himself behind a statue, at the next he was crouching on the grass.

Then all at once the girl turned pale. There was Liberta struggling with a tall man who had thrown him to the

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ground, and who was pressing his hand over his mouth so that he could only utter a feeble groan. She was about to cry out, when she saw the two men rise together from the ground, and deliberately make a survey of each other.

"You! you! is it you?" said Liberta.

There had risen to her vision what appeared to be a phantom from another world, and as Liberta now followed the man who had felled him to the earth, she recognized Martin Paz, and was unable to do more than re-echo the words she had heard, "You! you! is it you?"

Gazing at her intently, Martin addressed her with an earnest appeal.

"Does the bride hear the revelry of the bridal feast? Are not the guests speeding to the hall, that they may rejoice in the beauty of her charms? The victim, is she prepared for the sacrifice? Is it with these pale cheeks, and trembling lips, that she is going to surrender herself to the bridegroom?"

She scarcely understood him, but he continued his pathetic address, "Why should the maiden weep? There is peace *there;* far away from the house of her father; far away from the home where she drops her tears of bitterness; there is peace *there.*"

And drawing himself to his full height, he stood pointing with his finger to the summits of the Cordilleras, as if showing that there was a refuge in the mountains to which she might escape.

The girl felt herself constrained by an irresistible impulse. There were voices close to her very chamber; she heard the sound of approaching footsteps; her father was on his way, perchance the man to whom she was betrothed was coming too. Suddenly Martin Paz extinguished the lamp that hung above her head, and his whistle, just as on that evening on the Plaza-Mayor, resounded shrilly through the gathering shades of night.

The door burst open. Samuel and André Certa hurried in. The darkness was all bewildering. The servants hastened to bring some lanterns; but the room was empty.

"Death and fury!" shrieked the half-breed.

"Where is she?" exclaimed the Jew.

"For this," said André, with the coarsest insolence, "I hold you responsible."

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A cold sweat came over the old man, and uttering a cry of anguish, he rushed away, followed by his servants.

All this time Martin Paz had been flying, at fullest speed, along the streets of the town. Summoned by his well-known signal, at about two hundred paces from Samuel's house, there were several Indians ready at his call.

"Away to our mountains!" he cried.

"To the Marquis Don Vegal's!" came from a voice close behind. The Indian turned, and found the marquis standing by his side.

"Will you not trust the maiden to me?" said Don Vegal.

Martin bowed his head in token of assent, and said in a smothered voice: "To the house of Don Vegal!"

Thus yielding her to the marquis, Martin had every confidence that the girl would be in safety, and from a feeling of what was owing to propriety, he resolved that he would not himself pass the night under the marquis's roof.

He made his way in another direction; his head was hot, and a fevered blood was throbbing in his veins; but he had hardly gone a hundred yards, when a party of half a dozen men threw themselves across his path, and in spite of his obstinate resistance, secured his arms, and blindfolded him. He raised a cry of desperation, supposing that he had fallen into the hands of his foes.

It did not take many minutes to convey him to a neighboring resort, and on the bandage being removed from his eyes, he saw that he was in a low room of the tavern where his associates had organized their scheme of revolution.

Sambo, who had been present at the rescue of the young girl, was there; Manangani and some others were standing round him. Martin's eyes flashed angrily.

"No pity had my son for me," said Sambo. "Shame that for so long he should permit me to believe that he was dead."

"Is it fair," asked Manangani, "that on the very eve of a revolution, Martin Paz, our chief, should betake himself to the quarters of the enemy."

Not a word fell from the lips of the prisoner in reply to either one or the other.

"Why should it be tolerated," demanded Manangani, "that our interests should be sacrificed to a woman?" and as he spoke he approached nearer to Martin, holding a

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poignard in his hand. Martin Paz did not even glance at him, but still stood perfectly unmoved.

"Let us speak first," said Sambo, "and act afterwards. If my son is disloyal to his brethren, I shall know how to exact a proper vengeance. Let him be on his guard! That Jew's daughter is not concealed so closely as to elude our grasp. He must think betimes. Let him once be condemned to die, and there will not be a stone in the town on which he could rest his head; let him, on the other hand, be the deliverer of his country, and he may crown that head with perpetual glory!"

Although Martin Paz did not break his silence, it was obvious that a mighty struggle was going on within his soul: Sambo had succeeded in stirring the depths of that ardent nature.

For all the projects of insurrection Martin Paz was indispensable. His was an influence over the Indians of the town which none but himself enjoyed; he bent them at his will; he had but to give the word, and they were prepared to follow him to death.

By Sambo's order the bonds were removed from his arms, and he stood at liberty. The old Indian looked at him steadily, and bade him once more listen. "To-morrow," he said, "is the feast of the Amanacães. While the festival is at its height, our brethren will fall like an avalanche upon the unarmed and unsuspecting men of Lima. Now take your choice. There is the way to the mountains: there is the way to the town. You are free!"

"To the mountains! to the mountains!" shouted Martin; "and death to our foes!"

And the first rays of the rising sun cast a ruddy glow into the council-chamber of the Indian chiefs in the heart of the Cordilleras.

CHAPTER IX

THE FESTIVAL

AND now the great annual fête of the Amanacães had arrived. It was the 24th of June. On foot, on horseback, in carriages, the bulk of the population made its way to the well-known spot about half a league from the town. In-

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dians and half-breeds were wont alike to share the mutual recreation; kinsmen and acquaintances marched gayly to the festive scene. Each group carried its own stock of provisions, and many of them were headed by a musician, who accompanied the popular melodies which he sung with the notes of his guitar. Starting through the fields of maize and indigo, they entered the banana-groves beyond, and traversed the charming avenues of willows which led them to the woods, where the aromatic odor of citrons and oranges mingled with the wild perfume of the hills. All along the route the itinerant vendors hawked a liberal supply of beer and brandy, which served to excite the merriment, and at times to stimulate the boisterousness of the pleasure-seeking multitude. Equestrians made their horses prance in the very middle of the crowd, vying with one another in displaying their speed and dexterity.

The festival derives its name from the little flowers that grow on the mountains. There is a universal license, yet it is exceedingly rare for the noise of a quarrel to be heard mingling with the thousand demonstrations of general joy. A few lancers here and there, wearing their flashing cuirasses, are more than sufficient to preserve order among the teeming crowds.

But whilst the festive crowd was enjoying the fair prospect, a bloody tragedy had been prepared below the snowy summits of the Cordilleras. Whilst the homes of Lima were being deserted by their occupants, a great number of Indians were wandering about the streets. They had been usually accustomed to join the general festivity, but on this occasion they went to and fro in the town, silent and preoccupied. Every now and then a busy chief would give them some secret order, and pass quickly on his way. Little by little they concentrated all their force upon the richest quarters of the town.

Thus the day of rejoicing passed on, and as the sun began to sink into the west, the time arrived in which the aristocrats in their turn went out to join the general throng. The costliest of dresses were seen in the handsomest of carriages which lined the avenues on either side of the road that led to the Amancäes, and pedestrians, horses, and vehicles were mingled in inextricable confusion.

The cathedral clock now tolled the hour of five.

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Up from the town there rose a mighty cry. At a concerted signal, masses of armed Indians from many a by-way and many a house, rushed out and filled the streets. The wealthiest districts were almost in a moment invaded by troops of the revolutionary tribe, not a few of whom were brandishing lighted torches high above their heads.

"Death to the Spaniards! Death and destruction to the tyrants!" were the watch-words of the rebels. Forthwith from the surrounding heights came trooping in a multitude of other Indians, hurrying to aid their brethren in the general uproar.

Imagination can scarcely realize the alarming aspect of the town at this moment. The revolutionists had penetrated in all directions. At the head of one party, Martin Paz was waving a black flag, and whilst some detachments were assaulting the houses that were doomed to pillage, he led his troops towards the Plaza-Mayor. Close beside him was the ferocious Manangani, bellowing out his infuriated orders.

But forewarned of the revolt, the soldiers of the Government had ranged themselves in a line along the front of the president's palace, and a general fusillade startled the insurgents as they approached. Taken thoroughly by surprise at this reception, and seeing many of their number fall, the Indians, frantic with excitement, made a tremendous rush upon the troops, and great was the *mêlée* that ensued. Both Martin Paz and Manangani performed prodigies of valor, and it was only marvelous how they escaped with their lives. It was of all things most essential that the palace should be taken, and that they should establish themselves within its walls.

"Forward!" cried Martin Paz, as again and again he urged his followers to the assault.

Although they had been routed in many quarters, the besiegers nevertheless succeeded in causing the battalion of soldiers that guarded the front of the palace to beat a retreat, and Manangani had already placed his foot upon the flight of steps when he was brought to a sudden stand. The reserve troops behind had unmasked two pieces of artillery, and were preparing to open fire.

There was not a moment to lose; the battery must be captured before it could be brought into action.

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"We two must do it," shouted Manangani vehemently. But Martin did not hear him; he was attending to a negro, who was whispering in his ear that the house of the Marquis Don Vegal was being plundered, and that there was every chance that the marquis himself would be assassinated.

Martin Paz began to retreat. To no purpose did Manangani rally him to the attack, and all at once the roar of the cannon was heard, and the Indians were swept down on every side.

"Follow me!" shouted Martin, and gathering a handful of companions around him, he succeeded in effecting a passage back through the line of soldiers.

It was a retreat that had all the evil consequences of an act of treachery. The Indians believed themselves abandoned by their chief, and in vain did Manangani urge them to renew the fight. A heavy fusillade threw them into utter disorder, and their rout was soon complete. Flames at a little distance attracted some of the fugitives to the work of pillage, but the soldiers pursued them with their swords, and killed them in considerable numbers.

Meanwhile Martin Paz had reached the residence of Don Vegal, and found it the scene of a furious struggle. Sambo was there taking the lead in the work of destruction. He had a double motive to urge him on; not only was he eager to plunder the Spaniard, but he was anxious to get possession of Sarah as a pledge of his son's fidelity.

The gate and the walls of the great courtyard were thrown down, and revealed the marquis, sword in hand, supported by his servants, and making a vigorous defence against the mob that was assailing him. His determined attitude and indomitable courage gave a certain sublimity to his appearance; he stood foremost in the fray, and his own arm had laid low the corpses that were on the ground before him.

But altogether hopeless seemed the struggle he was making against the numbers of Indians, which were now recruited by the arrival of those who had been vanquished on the Plaza-Mayor. He was all but succumbing to the superior force of his opponents, when, like a thunderbolt, Martin Paz fell upon the insurgents in the rear, compelling them to face about, and then making his way through a shower of bullets to the marquis's side, he protected him with his own body from the blows which assailed him.

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"Well done! well done! my friend!" shouted Don Vegal, clasping his defender's hand.

"Well done! well done! Martin Paz," repeated another voice that went to his very soul.

He recognized Sarah; her words gave redoubled vigor to his arm, and a veritable circle of bleeding figures lay stretched around him.

Sambo's troops meanwhile were forced to yield. Twenty times did the modern Brutus make his unsuccessful assaults upon his son, and twenty times did Martin Paz withhold his hand, which was able, if he would, to strike down his father.

Covered with blood, Manangani suddenly took his stand at Sambo's side, and spurred him on to vengeance. "Your oath!" he cried. "Remember your oath! You have sworn to avenge the traitor's guilt upon his kinsman, upon his friends, upon himself! The time has come! See, here are the soldiers, and André Certa is with them!"

"Come on, then," said Sambo, with the laugh of a maniac; "come on now!"

Then leaving the courtyard, the two together made their way towards a body of troops who were hastening to the scene; they were aimed at by the advancing corps, but not in the least intimidated, Sambo made his way straight up to André Certa.

"You are André Certa," he said. "Your bride is in Don Vegal's house, and Martin Paz is going to carry her off to yonder mountains."

He said no more, and both the Indians disappeared. In this way Sambo had prevailed to bring the two mortal antagonists face to face. The soldiers were misled by the presence of Martin Paz, and rushed onwards to attack the house.

Maddened with fury was André Certa. As soon as he caught sight of Martin he made a dash upon him. The young Indian, as he recognized the half-breed, howled out a challenge of defiance, and quitted the flight of steps which he had so valiantly defended.

Here then stood the rivals: foot to foot, breast to breast, face to face. Keen was the survey that each took of the other. Neither friend nor enemy ventured to approach; all alike looked on in terror, and with bated breath. André first made a desperate lunge at Martin Paz, who had dropped

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his dagger; but, just in time to escape the blow, Martin had grasped André's uplifted arm. André tried in vain to disengage it, and Martin, wresting the poignard from his adversary's hand, plunged it into his very heart.

Martin threw himself into the arms of the marquis, who shouted impetuously, "Now quick, off, off to the mountains; wait no further bidding, but fly!"

At this instant old Samuel made his appearance, and flinging himself upon Certa's body, drew out a small pocketbook which the dead man had upon him. The action did not however escape the observation of Martin, who, turning upon the Jew, snatched the book from his hands, and turning over the leaves, extracted a paper, which, with an exclamation of joy, he handed to the marquis.

The marquis looked confounded as he slowly read the words, "Received of Señor André Certa the sum of 100,000 piastres: which I undertake to restore, if Sarah, whom I saved from the wreck of the *San José*, should not prove to be the daughter and sole heiress of the Marquis Don Vegal."

"Daughter! my daughter!" exclaimed the bewildered Spaniard, and hurried towards the apartment where Sarah was concealed.

The girl had gone. Father Joachim was there, covered in blood, and could only utter a few disjointed words, "Sambo . . . carried off . . . Rio Madeira!"

CHAPTER X

UNITED IN DEATH

"OFF," said Martin Paz, "let us be off!"

And without saying a word, the marquis quickly followed the Indian's lead. His daughter! Yes, at all hazards he must find his daughter.

Mules were brought without delay, and the two men mounted. They had buckled on large gaiters below their knees, and put on broad-brimmed straw hats to shade their heads; they carried pistols in their holsters, and their rifles were slung to their sides. Martin had fastened his lasso around him, attaching one end to the harness of his mule.

Well enough did he know every plain and every pass of that mountain-chain, and had no doubt as to the district

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into which Sambo would attempt to convey the maiden; his betrothed he longed to call her; but did he dare thus to think of Don Vegal's daughter?

One thought, one aim, occupied alike the Indian and the Spaniard, as they penetrated the gorges of the Cordilleras, darkened by the plantations of pines and cocoa-trees. They had left behind the cedars, the cotton-trees, and the aloes; they had passed beyond the fields planted with luzerne and maize. To traverse the mountains at this season was a perilous undertaking. The melting of the snow beneath the rays of the summer sun had swollen the streams to cataracts, and continually immense masses came rolling down from the peaks above into the chasms below.

But neither by day nor night did the father and the lover permit themselves to rest. They had reached the point, the very highest in the chain, and, worn out with fatigue, seemed ready to fall into that condition of despair which deprives men of all power to act. It required almost a superhuman effort to go on; but turning to the eastern declivity of the mountain-range, they fell upon traces of the fugitives, and with rekindled energy began the descent.

Reaching the almost boundless virgin forests that cover the regions between Brazil and Peru, they made their way through woods that might have proved inextricable had not the practiced sagacity of Martin stood them in good stead. Nothing escaped his observation; and the ashes of an extinguished fire, some vestiges of footsteps, some twigs broken off from the branches, and the character of certain fragments in the path—all attracted his experienced eye.

Don Vegal feared that his ill-fated daughter had been conveyed on foot over the crags and through the thickets, but the Indian pointed out to him some indications in the stony ground which were undoubtedly the impressions of an animal's feet; and, above all, the branches had been broken back in the same direction, and that at a height which could only be reached by a person that was mounted. The marquis too gladly yielded his conviction, and rejoiced to think that for Martin Paz there was no obstacle insurmountable, and no peril that he could not overcome.

At length one evening, postively worn out by fatigue, they made a halt. They had just come to the banks of a river. It was the upper stream of the Madeira, which

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the Indian knew perfectly well. Enormous mangroves overhung the water and connected themselves with the trees on the farther bank by creepers hanging in fanciful festoons.

The question at once arose about the fugitives. Had they gone up the stream, or followed it farther down? or had they contrived by any means to go straight across? It was all important to decide, and Martin took unbounded pains to follow up some footprints for a distance along the rocks till he came to a glade which was somewhat less dense than the surrounding woods. There he observed such indentations in the soil, as left him no doubt that a group of people had crossed the river at that very spot.

"To-morrow," he said, "perhaps our journey may be over."

"Nay, let us go on now," said the marquis.

"We must cross the river," replied Martin.

"Well, why not swim across at once?"

And without delay they proceeded to undress, and tying up their clothes in a bundle, that Martin proposed to carry over on his head, they made their way into the stream as noiselessly as possible, that they might not disturb any of the alligators that are abundant in all the rivers both of Peru and Brazil.

On arriving safely at the farther bank Martin Paz made it his first care to search for the track which the Indians must have made, but after a long search amidst the fallen leaves, and along the pebbly shore, he was able to discover nothing. Remembering, however, that the strength of the current had very probably made them drift away from a straight course, they reascended the bank for a considerable distance, when they came upon footprints so decided that they could not be mistaken.

It was manifestly the place where Sambo had effected his passage over the Madeira with his troop, which had been largely increased on its way. The truth was that the Indians of the mountains and the plains, who had been impatiently expecting the success of their insurrection, now learned that it had miscarried through treachery; burning with rage, and finding that there was a victim on whom to vent their wrath, they had joined themselves to the old Indian's retinue.

The young girl had little consciousness of what was go-

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ing on around her. She went forwards because there were hands that urged her forwards.. Had they left her in the middle of the wilderness she would not have stirred a step to escape death. The memory of the young Indian would now and then flit across her mind, yet she was little otherwise than an inanimate burden upon the neck of the mule that carried her. Beyond the river, when two of the men dragged her along on foot, she left a trace of blood, marking every spot on which she trod.

It did not occur to Sambo, and therefore gave him no uneasiness, that the dotted crimson streak was an index to point out the way they went. He was approaching the limit of his flight, and soon the rushing cataracts of the river were heard with their deafening roar.

The party halted at an insignificant village, comprising about a hundred huts, made of canes and clay. As they entered, a multitude of women and children greeted them with boisterous acclamations; but all their delight was changed to rage as soon as they heard of the supposed treachery of Martin Paz.

Without quailing in any way before her enemies, Sarah surveyed them with a languid gaze. Though they insulted her with the vilest gestures, and assailed her ears with obloquy and savage threats, she was passive and unmoved.

"Where is my husband?" demanded one of the angry crones; "he has been killed through you."

"My brother too," added another, "he has not come back again; my brother has lost his life for you!"

Then the general chorus rose aloud, "Die! you shall die! and your flesh shall be given piecemeal to us all!"

And as they shouted, they brandished their knives aloft, waved torches of burning fire, took up stones of prodigious weight, and heaped repeated menaces on her head.

"Stop!" cried Sambo, "let us hear the judgment of the chiefs!"

In obedience to his order they stayed their demonstrations of revenge, and contented themselves with casting angry glances at the girl, who had sunk down for rest, bespattered as she was with blood, upon the stony margin of the stream.

Just below the village, the Rio Madeira, after being pent up between narrow confines, made its escape in a roaring cataract, which precipitated itself in a mighty volume to a

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depth of more than a hundred feet. The sentence passed on Sarah was that she should be cast into the flood immediately above the point from which the rapid made its start. At the first dawn of morning she was to be tied to a canoe of bark, and left to the mercy of the current of the Madeira.

That the execution of the sentence was deferred till the morrow, was not for the purpose of giving respite to the condemned victim, but only that she might be reserved for a night of terror and alarm.

The publication of the verdict was a signal for universal joy, and a frantic outburst of delight spread all around.

The night was spent in the wildest orgies. The Indians became intoxicated with their draughts of burning brandy; they danced in derisive revelry around the passive girl; they rushed about with disheveled hair, and scoured the wilderness around, waving aloft great flaming pine-branches. Thus they continued till the early twilight of the morning; and thus, with yet frantic frenzy, they saluted the first rays of the rising sun.

The fatal hour arrived, and no sooner was the girl liberated from the stake to which she had been secured, than a hundred arms were voluntarily outstretched to bear her to the scene of punishment. The name of Martin Paz escaped her lips, and the outcry of hatred and revenge waxed louder than before. In order to reach the highest level of the stream, they had to clamber by the roughest paths up the rocks that overhung the bed of the river, so that when she arrived Sarah was besprinkled once again with blood. They found the bark canoe in readiness at about a hundred yards above the waterfall, and having laid their prisoner down they lashed her in her place with cords that cut deeply into her very flesh.

The cry of the multitude went up as the cry of one man—"Vengeance!"

Whirling round and round, the canoe was carried rapidly along. At this moment, upon the opposite bank, were seen two men, Martin Paz and Don Vegal.

"My daughter! my daughter!" shouted the father as he fell upon his knees.

The canoe swept onwards nearer to the fall. Mounted upon a rock, Martin Paz unwound his long lasso, which

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whistled round his head, and at the very instant when the canoe was being sucked into the eddy of the cataract, the long leather lash was uncoiled, and caught the canoe in its sliding noose.

"Death and destruction!" howled the horde of Indians, beside themselves with rage.

Martin Paz raised his tall figure to its fullest height, and gently drew the canoe, which had been hovering over the abyss, nearer and nearer to himself.

Suddenly an arrow came whizzing through the air, and Martin Paz, falling forwards into the frail bark that carried Sarah, was swallowed up with her in the whirlpool of the cataract. Within a moment another arrow had pierced Don Vegal's heart.

It was bliss to Sarah to know that she and Martin Paz were joined in eternal nuptials, and the last thought of the maiden was that he was thus baptized into the faith which in her heart she loved.

THE END

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The Mutineers
OR
A Tragedy of Mexico

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The Mutineers

CHAPTER I

FROM GUAJAN TO ACAPULCO

ON the 18th of October, 1825, the *Asia*, a high-built Spanish ship, and the *Constanzia*, a brig of eighteen guns, cast anchor off the island of Guajan, one of the Mariannas. The crews of these vessels, badly-fed, ill-paid, and harassed with fatigue during the six months occupied by their passage from Spain, had been secretly plotting a mutiny.

The spirit of insubordination more especially exhibited itself on board the *Constanzia*, commanded by Captain Don Orteva, a man of iron will, whom nothing could bend. The brig had been impeded in her progress by several serious accidents, so unforeseen that they could alone, it was evident, have been caused by intentional malice. The *Asia*, commanded by Don Roque de Guzuarte, had been compelled consequently to put into port with her. One night the compass was broken, no one knew how; on another the shrouds of the foremast gave way as if they had been cut, and the mast with all its rigging fell over the side. Lastly, during important maneuvers, on two occasions the rudder-ropes broke in the most unaccountable manner.

Don Orteva had especially to keep an eye on two men of his crew—his lieutenant Martinez and José the captain of the maintop. Lieutenant Martinez, who had already compromised his character as an officer by joining in the cabals of the forecastle, had in consequence been several times under arrest, and during his imprisonment, the midshipman Pablo had done duty as lieutenant of the *Constanzia*.

Young Pablo was one of those gallant natures whose generosity prompts them to dare anything. He was an orphan who, saved and brought up by Captain Orteva, would readily have given his life for that of his benefactor.

The evening before they were to leave Guajan, Lieutenant Martinez went to a low tavern, where he met several petty officers, and seamen of both ships.

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"Comrades!" exclaimed Martinez, "thanks to the accidents which so opportunely happened, the ship and the brig were compelled to put into port, and I have been enabled to come here that I might discuss secretly with you some important matters!"

"Bravo!" replied the party of men, with one voice.

"Speak, lieutenant," exclaimed several of the sailors, "and let us hear your plans."

"This is my scheme," answered Martinez. "As soon as we shall have made ourselves masters of the two vessels, we will steer a course for the coast of Mexico. You must know that the new Confederation possesses no ships of war; she will, therefore, be eager to buy our ships without asking questions, and not only shall we regularly receive our pay for the future, but the price we obtain for the ships will be fairly divided among us."

"Agreed!"

"And what shall be the signal for acting in concert on board the two ships?" asked José the topman.

"A rocket fired from the *'Asia,"* answered Martinez; "that shall be the moment for action. We are ten to one, and the officers of the ship and the brig will be made prisoners before they will have time to know what is happening."

"When shall we look out for the signal?" asked one of the boatswain's mates of the *Constanzia.*

"In a few days hence, when we shall be off the island of Mindanao."

"But the Mexicans, will they not receive our ships with cannon shots?" inquired José in a hesitating tone. "If I mistake not, the Confederation has issued a decree to prohibit any Spanish ships from entering her harbors, and instead of gold it will be iron and lead they will be sending on board us!"

"Don't trouble yourself about that, José. We will let them know who we are from a distance," answered Martinez.

"How is that to be done?"

"By hoisting the Mexican colors at the gaffs of our ships;" and saying this, Lieutenant Martinez displayed before the eyes of the mutineers, a green, white, and red flag.

The exhibition of this emblem of Mexican independence was rceived with gloomy silence.

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"Do you already regret the flag of Spain?" cried the lieutenant in a mocking tone. "Very well, let those who feel such regrets at once separate from us, and pleasantly continue the voyage under the orders of Captain Don Roque, or Commander Don Orteva. As for us, who do not wish any longer to obey them, we shall soon find the means of rendering them helpless."

"We'll stick by you," cried the whole party with one accord.

During this time Don Orteva was sadly troubled with sinister forebodings. He was well aware how completely fallen was the Spanish navy; that insubordination had greatly contributed to its destruction. On the other hand his patriotism would not allow him to reflect calmly on the successive reverses which had overtaken his country, to which, as it seemed to him, the revolt of the Mexican States had put the finishing stroke. He was frequently in the habit of conversing with the midshipman Pablo on these serious matters, and he especially took a satisfaction in talking to him of the former supremacy of the Spanish navy in every part of the ocean.

"My boy," said he one day, "we have no longer discipline among our sailors. There are, especially, signs of mutiny on board this vessel; and it is possible—indeed I have a foreboding—that some abominable treason will deprive me of life! But you will avenge me, will you not? You will at the same time avenge Spain; for will not the blow which strikes me, be really aimed at her?"

"I swear it, Captain Orteva!" answered Pablo.

"Do not make yourself the enemy of anyone on board the brig, but remember when the day comes, my boy—that unhappy time—the best mode of serving one's country is first to watch, and then to chastise, the wretched beings who would betray her."

"I promise you that I will die!" answered the midshipman, "yes, that I will die, should it be necessary, to punish the traitors!"

Pablo went below. Martinez remained alone on the poop and turned his eyes toward the *Asia,* which was sailing to leeward of the brig. The evening was magnificent, and presaged one of those lovely nights in the tropics which are both fresh and calm.

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The lieutenant endeavored to ascertain in the gloom who were the men on watch. He recognized José and those sailors with whom he had held the meeting at the island of Guajan. Martinez immediately approached the man at the helm. He spoke two words to him in a low voice, and that was all. But it might have been observed that the helm was put a little more a-weather than before, so that the brig sensibly drew nearer the larger ship.

Contrary to the usual custom on board ship, Martinez paced up and down on the lee side, in order that he might obtain an uninterrupted view of the *Asia*. Restless and agitated, he kept turning a speaking-trumpet round and round in his hand.

Suddenly a report was heard on board the ship.

At this signal Martinez leaped on to the hammock-nettings, and in a loud voice, "All hands on deck!" he cried. "Brail up the courses!"

At that moment Don Orteva, followed by his officers, came out of his cabin, and addressing himself to the lieutenant, "Why was that order given?"

At this moment some fresh reports were heard from on board the *Asia*.

Don Orteva, turning to the few men who remained near him, "Stand by me, my brave lads!" he cried. And advancing towards Martinez, "Seize that officer!" he exclaimed.

"Death to the commander!" replied Martinez.

Pablo and two officers drew their swords and held their pistols in their hands. Some seamen, led by the honest boatswain Jacopo, were rushing to their support, but, quickly stopped by the mutineers, were disarmed and rendered incapable of giving assistance.

The marines and the crew, drawn up across the entire width of the deck, advanced towards their officers. The men who had remained staunch to their duty, driven into a corner of the poop, had but one course to take—it was to throw themselves on the mutineers. Don Orteva pointed the muzzle of his pistol at Martinez.

At that moment a rocket was seen to rise from the deck of the *Asia*.

"Our friends have succeeded!" cried Martinez.

The bullet from Don Orteva's pistol was lost in space. The captain crossed swords with the lieutenant, but, over-

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whelmed by numbers and severely wounded, he was borne to the deck. His officers in a few seconds shared his fate.

Blue lights were now let off in the rigging of the brig, and replied to by others from the *Asia*. The mutiny had at the same moment broken out and proved triumphant on board the ship. Lieutenant Martinez was master of the *Constanzia*, and his prisoners were thrust pell mell into the main cabin.

"To the yard-arm with them!" shouted several of the most savage.

"Trice them up, trice them up! Dead men tell no tales!"

Lieutenant Martinez, at the head of these bloodthirsty mutineers, was rushing towards the main cabin, but the rest of the crew strongly objected to so cruel a massacre, and the officers were saved.

"Bring Don Orteva up on deck," cried Martinez.

His orders were obeyed; and the captain was bound to the rail of the brig, concealed by the mainsail. While there he was heard to shout out to his lieutenant, "Oh, you scoundrel! You base traitor!"

Martinez, losing all control over himself, leaped on the poop with an axe in his hand. Being prevented from reaching the captain, with a single vigorous stroke he cut the main sheet. The main boom, forced violently by the wind, struck the hapless Don Orteva on the head, and he fell lifeless on the deck.

A cry of horror rose from the crew of the brig.

"His death was accidental!" exclaimed Lieutenant Martinez. "Heave the body overboard!"

The two vessels, keeping close together, ran towards the coast of Mexico. The next morning an island was seen abeam. The boats of the *Asia* and *Constanzia* were lowered, and the officers, with the exception of the midshipman Pablo and Jacopo the boatswain, who had both submitted to Martinez, were landed on its desert shore. But a few days subsequently they were all happily taken off by an English whaler and conveyed to Manila.

Some weeks after the events which have been described, the two vessels anchored in the Bay of Monterey, on the coast of Old California. Martinez, going on shore, informed the military governor of the port of his intentions. He offered to carry to Mexico the two Spanish vessels with

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their stores and guns, and to place their crews at the command of the Confederation. In return, all he asked was that the Mexican government should pay the whole of the wages due to them since they quitted Spain.

In reply to these overtures, the governor said that he had not sufficient authority to treat with him. He recommended Martinez to sail for Mexico, where he could himself easily settle the matter. The lieutenant followed this advice, and leaving the *Asia* at Monterey, after a month devoted to pleasure on shore, he again sailed in the *Constanzia*. Pablo, Jacopo, and José formed part of the crew of the brig, which with a fair wind under all sail, made the best of her way for the port of Acapulco.

CHAPTER II

FROM ACAPULCO TO CIGUALAN

Of the four ports which Mexico possesses on the side of the Pacific Ocean, namely, San Blas, Zacatula, Tehuantepec, and Acapulco, the last offers the greatest accommodation to shipping. The town, it is true, is badly built and unhealthy, but the anchorage is secure, and the harbor can easily contain a hundred vessels. Lofty cliffs shelter the ships at anchor from every wind, and form so tranquil a basin, that a stranger arriving by land looks down upon what he may suppose to be a lake surrounded by mountains.

Acapulco was at this time protected by three forts flanking it on the right side, while the entrance was defended by a battery of seven guns which could, when necessary, cross their fire at a right angle with those of Fort San Diego. That fort, armed with thirty pieces of artillery, completely commanded the harbor, and would inevitably have sent to the bottom any craft which might have attempted to force an entrance into the port.

The town had therefore nothing to fear, notwithstanding which, a universal panic seized the inhabitants three months after the events which have just been related.

It happened thus: A ship was signaled approaching the port. So completely did the people of Acapulco doubt the intentions of the stranger, that nothing would make them believe that she came as a friend. That which the new

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Confederation mostly feared, and not without reason, was to be again brought under the dominion of Spain. This was because, notwithstanding that a treaty of commerce had been signed with Great Britain, and a *chargé d'affaires* had arrived from London, which court had acknowledged the Republic, the Mexican Government did not possess a single ship to protect their coast. However that might be, the strange vessel was evidently some hardy adventurer, which the northwesterly gales, blustering on their shores from the autumnal equinox to the spring, had probably driven hither with shivered canvas.

If this was not the case, the people of Acapulco could not tell what to think, and at all events they were making every possible preparation to resist the expected attack of the stranger, when the suspicious vessel ran up to her peak the flag of Mexican independence!

Having got to about half cannon-shot from the port, the *Constanzia,* whose name could be clearly read on her counter, suddenly came to an anchor, her sails were furled, and a boat, which was at once lowered, pulled rapidly towards the harbor.

Lieutenant Martinez, having disembarked from her, proceeded at once to the governor, to whom he explained the circumstances which brought him to the place. The latter highly approved of the resolution taken by the lieutenant to join the Mexicans, and assured him that General Guadalupe, President of the Confederation, would certainly agree to purchase the two vessels.

No sooner was the news known in the town than the people broke out into transports of joy. The whole population turned out to admire the first vessel of the Mexican navy, and saw in their new possession, with this proof of the disorganization prevailing in the Spanish service, the means of more completely defeating all fresh attempts which might be made by their former and much hated oppressors to overcome them.

Martinez returned on board the brig. Some hours afterwards the *Constanzia* was anchored in the port, and her crew were quartered among the inhabitants of Acapulco. When, however, Martinez called over the roll of his followers, neither Pablo nor Jacopo answered to their names. They had both disappeared!

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The following day two horsemen set out from Acapulco on the deserted and mountainous road for Mexico City. The horsemen were Martinez and José. The sailor was well acquainted with the road. He had on numerous occasions climbed these mountains of Anahuac. So well did he know it, that although an Indian guide had offered his services they had been declined.

"Let us ride faster!" said Martinez, sticking his spurs into his horse's flanks. "I have my doubts about this disappearance of Pablo and Jacopo. Can they mean to make the bargain for themselves, and rob us of our shares?"

"By St. Jago! they won't be very far wrong there," sulkily repiled the seaman. "It will be a case of thieves robbing thieves, such as we are."

"How many days will it take us to reach Mexico?"

"Four or five, lieutenant—a mere walk; but not so fast; you surely see what a steep hill there is before us."

In reality they had reached the first slopes which form the sides of the mountains rising above the wide plains.

"Our horses are not shod," said the seaman, pulling up, "and their hoofs will soon be worn out on these granite rocks."

"Let us push on," exclaimed Martinez, setting the example. "Our horses come from the farms of Southern Mexico, and in their journeys across the Savannahs they are unaccustomed to these inequalities in the ground. Let us profit therefore by the evenness of the road, and make the best of our way out of these vast solitudes, which are not formed to put us in good spirits."

"Does Lieutenant Martinez feel any remorse?" asked José, shrugging his shoulders.

"Remorse! No."

Martinez fell back into perfect silence, and the two travelers made their steeds move on at a rapid trot.. The sun had sunk beneath the horizon when they reached the village of Cigualan. The village is composed of a few huts inhabited by poor Indians, who are generally known as tame Indians—that is to say, they cultivate the soil.

The two Spaniards were received with but scant hospitality. The Indians recognized them as belonging to the nation of their ancient oppressors, and showed themselves but little inclined to render them assistance. This was in

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consequence of the fact, that two other travelers had a short time before passed through the village, and had laid violent hands on the small amount of available food which they could discover. The lieutenant and his comrade paid no attention to these circumstances, which indeed appeared to them nothing extraordinary.

In a short time they secured food, and dined, as men do after a long journey, with sharp appetites. The repast finished, they stretched themselves on the ground with their daggers in their hands; they then, notwithstanding the hardness of their couches, and the incessant biting of the mosquitos, overcome by fatigue, quickly fell asleep.

During the night Martinez frequently started up and, in an agitated voice, repeated the names of Jacopo and Pablo, whose disappearance so completely occupied his mind.

CHAPTER III

FROM CIGUALAN TO CUERNAVACA

THE next morning at daybreak, the horses were saddled and bridled. The travelers, taking a worn-away path which wound like a serpent before them, directed their course towards the east, where the sun was just then seen ascending above the mountain tops.

"When shall we get over the mountains, José?"

"By to-morrow evening, lieutenant, and from their summit—although too far off it is true—we shall perceive the end of our journey, that golden town of Mexico. Do you know what I am thinking of, lieutenant?"

Martinez did not reply.

"I ask myself what can have become of the officers of the ship and brig which we abandoned on the desert island."

Martinez trembled. "I do not know," he answered sullenly.

"I most heartily hope that all those great persons have died of hunger," continued José, "or perhaps when we landed them, some of them may have tumbled into the sea, and there is on those shores a kind of shark—the tintorea, who never lets anybody escape him. Holy Mary! should Captain Don Orteva have come to life he may have the chance of being swallowed up by a fish. But, happily, his head was

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struck by the mainboom, and by the noise it made must have been completely crushed."

"Hold your tongue!" replied Martinez.

The sailor rode on with closed mouth. "See what curious scruples this man has," said José to himself; he then added in his usual voice, "On my return I shall settle down in this charming country of Mexico, where one can enjoy, without stint, these beautiful ananas and bananas, and where one can eat off plates of gold and silver."

"Was it for this you mutinied?" asked Martinez.

"Why not, lieutenant? it was an affair of dollars."

"Ah!" exclaimed Martinez with disgust.

"And you, why did you mutiny?" inquired José.

"I! It was an affair of wounded honor. The lieutenant wished to be revenged on his captain."

"Ah!" exclaimed José with contempt.

There was not much difference between these two men whatever were their motives.

"Hold!" cried Martinez, pulling up short, "what do I see down there?"

José rode towards the edge of the cliff ."I can see no one," he replied.

"I saw a man suddenly disappear," repeated Martinez.

"Imagination!"

"I did see him," replied the lieutenant impatiently.

"Very well, look for him at your leisure," and José continued to ride on.

Martinez proceeded towards a clump of mangroves, the branches of which, taking root as they touched the ground, formed an impenetrable thicket. The lieutenant dismounted. It was a perfect solitude. Suddenly he perceived a spiral form moving about in the shade. It was a small species of serpent, the head held fast under a piece of rock, while the hinder part twisted about as if it had been galvanized.

"There has been someone here," cried the lieutenant. Guilty and superstitious, he looked around in every direction. He began to tremble. "Who, who can they be?" he murmured.

"Well! what is the matter?" asked José, who had now rejoined him.

"It is nothing," answered Martinez; "let us go on."

The evening approached. Martinez followed some paces

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behind his guide José, and the latter, not without difficulty, found his way in the midst of the increasing darkness.

Looking out for a practicable path, swearing now at a stump against which he ran, now at the branch of a tree which struck him, threatening to put out the excellent cigar he was smoking, the lieutenant let his horse follow that of his companion. Useless remorse agitated him, and he gave himself up to the melancholy forebodings with which he was oppressed.

The night had now completely set in. The travelers pushed forward. They traversed without stopping, the little villages of Contepec and Iguala, and at length arrived at the town of Tasco. Here, little as they relished their food, their hunger was satisfied, and fatigue made even Martinez and José sleep until an hour after sunrise the next morning.

The lieutenant was the first to awake. "Let us start, José," he cried out.

The two Spaniards hastened to the stable, ordered their horses to be saddled, filled their saddle-bags with cakes of maize, grenadas, and dried meat, for among the mountains they would run a great risk of finding nothing to eat. The bill paid, they mounted their beasts and took the road once more.

"Have we nothing to fear among these solitudes?" asked Martinez.

"Nothing, excepting it may be a Mexican dagger!"

"That is true," answered Martinez, "the Indians of these elevated regions are still attached to the use of the dagger."

"Yes, indeed," replied the seaman, laughing. "What a number of words they have to designate their favorite arm—estoqe, verdugo, puna, anchillo, beldoque, navaja. The names come as quickly to their lips as the dagger does to their hands. Very well! so much the better. Holy Mary! at least we shall not have to fear those invisible balls from long carbines. I do not know anything more provoking than not to be able to discover the wretch who has killed one!"

"Who are the Indians who inhabit these mountains?" asked Martinez.

"Indeed, lieutenant, who can count the different races which have multiplied so rapidly in this El Dorado of Mexico? Just consider the various crosses, which I have

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studied carefully, with the intention of some day making an advantageous marriage. We here find the Mestisa, born of a Spaniard and an Indian woman; the Castisa, of a Castilian woman and a Spaniard; the Mulatto, of a Spanish woman and a Negro; the Monisque, born of a Mulatto woman and a Spaniard; the Albino, of a Monisque woman and a Spaniard; the Tintinclaire, of a Tornatras man and a Spanish woman; the Lovo, born of an Indian woman and a Negro; the Caribujo, of an Indian woman and a Lovo; the Barsino, born of a Coyote and a Mulatto woman; the Grifo, born of a Negress and a Lovo; the Albarazado, born of a Coyote and an Indian woman; the Chanesa, born of a Métis and an Indian man; the Mechino, born of a Lovo and a Coyote!"

José spoke the truth; the mixture of races in this country causes wonderful difficulties to anthropological students. Notwithstanding this learned conversation of the seaman, Martinez continually fell again into his previous taciturnity; he indeed sometimes pushed on ahead of his companion, whose presence seemed to annoy him.

In a short time two torrents crossed the road before them. The lieutenant pulled up at the first, disappointed on seeing that its bed was dry, for he had reckoned on watering his horse at it.

"Here we are, in a fix, lieutenant, without food and without water!" exclaimed José. "Never mind; follow me. We will look among these rocks and cliffs for the tree which is called the 'ahuehuelt,' which advantageously takes the place of the wisps of straw which decorate the fronts of inns. Under its shade one can always enjoy a cool draught, and, in a word, it is not only what some call water, but it is the wine of the desert."

The horsemen hunted about, and before long discovered the tree in question, but the promised fountain had been emptied, and they discovered it must have been visited only a short time previously.

"It is singular," observed José.

"It is indeed *singular*," said Martinez, growing pale. "Let us push forward."

The country now assumed an extremely rugged aspect. Gigantic peaks rose up before them, their basaltic summits stopping the clouds wafted by the winds from the Pacific.

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Doubling a large rock there appeared high above them the Fort of Cochicalcho, built by the ancient Mexicans on a spot elevated nineteen thousand feet above the sea. The travelers directed their course towards the base of this vast cone, which was crowned by tottering rocks and crumbling ruins.

After having dismounted and fastened their horses to the trunk of a tree, Martinez and José, wishing to ascertain the direction of their road, climbed up to the summit of the cone, assisted by the ruggedness of the sides.

Night now coming on made the outline of objects appear very indistinct, and assume the most fantastic forms. The old fort did not ill-resemble an enormous bison, crouching down, its head immovable; but as Martinez looked at the figure, his disordered imagination made him fancy that he saw the body of the monstrous animal move. He did not, however, say anything lest he should lay himself open to the railleries of the unscrupulous José. The latter hastily made his way round a part of the hill, and after he had disappeared for some time behind some broken fragments, he summoned his companion with the loudness of his "Saint Iagos!" and "Saint Marias!"

All of a sudden, an enormous night-bird, uttering a hoarse shriek, slowly rose on its outstretched wings.

Martinez stopped short; a vast mass of rock was seen to shake about thirty feet above him, then a portion of the mass became detached, and, shattering everything in its passage with the rapidity of a cannon-ball, came crashing downwards, and was engulfed in the abyss below.

"Santa Maria!" cried the seaman. "Hello, lieutenant, what has happened?"

"José!"

"Here!" The two Spaniards joined each other.

"What a fearful avalanche descended on us!" exclaimed the seaman. Martinez followed him without saying a word, and the two soon regained the lower plateau.

Here a large furrow marked the passage of the rock.

"Santa Maria!" exclaimed José. "Look here! Our two horses have disappeared—crushed dead!"

"It is too true!" said Martinez.

"See here!" The tree to which the two animals had been fastened had been indeed carried away with them.

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"If we had been under it!" philosophically observed the seaman, with a shrug of his shoulder.

Martinez was seized with a violent feeling of terror. "The serpent!—the fountain!—the avalanche!" he murmured.

Then he turned his haggard eyes on José.

"How is it that you do not speak to me of Captain Orteva?" he cried, his lips contracted with anger.

José drew back. "Oh, do not talk nonsense, lieutenant! Let us give the finishing stroke to our poor steeds and then push on. It will not do to stop here while the old mountain is combing her hair."

The two Spaniards proceeded on their road without saying a word, and in the middle of the night they arrived at Cuernavaca; but it was impossible to procure horses, so the next morning they directed their course on foot towards the heights of Popocatepetl.

CHAPTER IV

FROM CUERNAVACA TO POPOCATEPETL

THE temperature was cold and the country was devoid of vegetation. These inaccessible heights belonged to the icy zones, known as the cold territory. Already the fir trees of the foggy regions showed their withered outlines among the last oaks of these lofty elevations, and springs became more and more rare among the rugged rocks, consisting chiefly of porphyry and granite.

After six long hours the lieutenant and his companion began to drag themselves forward with difficulty, tearing their hands against rough masses of rock, and cutting their feet on the sharp stones in their path. At length fatigue compelled them to sit down. José occupied himself in preparing something to eat "What a cursed idea not to have taken the ordinary road!" he murmured.

They both, however, hoped to find at Aracopistla—a village completely shut in among the mountains—the means of transport to enable them to reach the end of their journey. But, after all, they might deceive themselves, and meet with the same want of accommodation and hospitality which they had encountered at Cuernavaca. They must, however, at all events, get there.

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The road was fearfully parched and dry; on every side fathomless precipices were to be seen in the sides of the mountains, and rocks appeared ready to fall on the heads of the travelers. To regain the chief road it was necessary to cross a portion of these muontains at a height of five thousand four hundred feet, near a rock known by the Indians as the "smoking rock," for it still exhibited signs of recent volcanic action. Dark chasms yawned on every side. Since the last journey of the seaman José some fresh outbreaks had completely changed the appearance of these solitudes, so that he could not recognize them; thus he completely lost himself among the inaccessible cliffs. He stopped to listen to some rumbling sounds which came issuing forth here and there from the cliffs.

"I can do no more!" at length cried José, sinking to the ground with fatigue.

"Push on!" cried Martinez with feverish impatience.

Some claps of thunder reverberated amid the gorges of Popocatepetl. "Now may Satan take me, for I may count myself among the lost souls!"

"Rise up and push on," roughly exclaimed Martinez.

He compelled José to get up, and the sailor stumbled forward. "And not a human being to guide us," murmured José.

"So much the better," observed the lieutenant gruffly as he moved forward.

"You do not know, then, that every year a thousand murders are committed in Mexico, and how many in the environs nobody can calculate!" said José.

"So much the better," answered Martinez.

Large drops of rain began to fall on the rocks around them, brightened by the last fading light in the sky.

"The points we lately saw so clearly around us, where are they now?" asked the lieutenant.

"Mexico is on the left, Puebla on the right," replied José, "if we could see anything, but nothing can now be distinguished."

It became fearfully dark. "Before us should be the mountain of Icetacihualt, and in the ravine at its base a good road; but what if we should not reach it!"

"Push on!" cried the lieutenant.

The thunder claps were now repeated with extreme

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violence among the mountains. The rain and the wind, which had hitherto been silent, increased the loudness of the echoes. José went swearing on at every step. Lieutenant Martinez, pale and silent, gazed with sinister looks at his companion, whom he regarded as an accomplice he would gladly get rid of.

Suddenly a flash of lightning illuminated the obscurity. The seaman and the lieutenant were on the edge of an abyss.

Martinez hurried up to José, and after the last clap of thunder he said to him, "José, I am afraid!"

"Do you dread the storm?"

"I do not dread the storm in the sky, José; but I fear the storm which agitates my breast!"

"Oh, you are still thinking of Don Orteva! Come on, lieutenant! you make me laugh," answered José. He, however, did not laugh, as Martinez surveyed him with his haggard eyes.

A terrible clap of thunder burst over them.

"Hold your tongue! hold your tongue!" cried Martinez, who appeared to be no longer master of himself.

"The night is a favorable one for preaching to me!" replied the seaman. "If you have any fear, lieutenant, shut up your eyes and your ears."

"It seems to me," cried Martinez, "that I see the captain —Don Orteva—with his head crushed—there, there!"

A dark shadow, illuminated the next moment by a flash of lightning, arose within twenty feet of the lieutenant and his companion.

At the same instant José saw close to him Martinez, his countenance pale and distorted with passion, his hand grasping a dagger.

"What is there!" he cried out.

A flash of lightning environed them both.

"What! Kill me!" cried José. The next moment he fell, a corpse, and Martinez fled in the midst of the tempest, his bloody weapon in his hand.

A few moments afterwards two men hung over the dead body of the seaman, saying, "This is one of them!"

Martinez fled like a madman across the dark solitudes; his head uncovered, regardless of the rain, which came down in torrents.

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THE UPRISING

Don Orteva, turned to the few men who remained near him, "Stand by me, my brave lads!" he cried. And advancing toward Martinez, "Seize that officer!" he exclaimed.

"Death to the commander!" replied Martinez. * * * *

The bullet from Don Orteva's pistol was lost in space. The captain crossed swords with the lieutenant, but, overwhelmed by numbers and severely wounded, he was borne to the deck.—Page 164.

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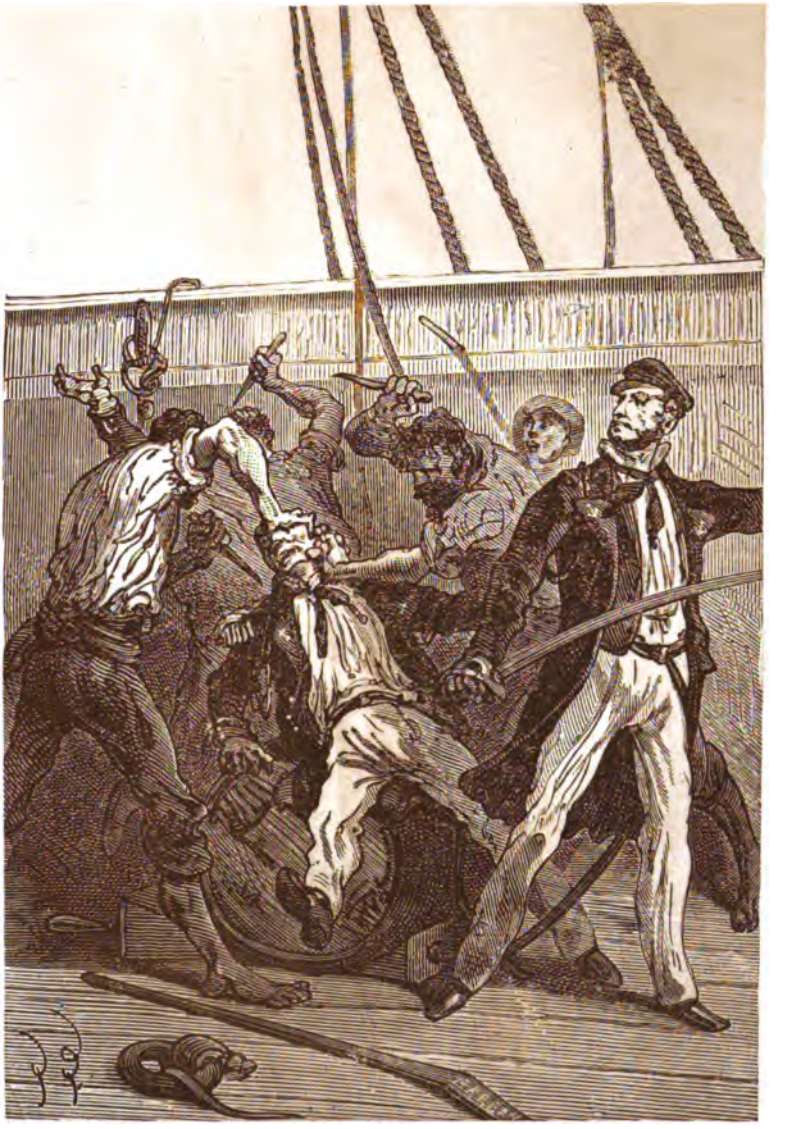

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"Kill! kill!" he shrieked out, stumbling over the slippery rocks.

Suddenly he heard a hoarse sound in the depths beneath his feet. He stopped, knowing that it was the roaring of a torrent.

It was the little river Ixtolucca, which rushed on five hundred feet below him. Some paces off, over the torrent, was thrown a bridge formed of ropes. It was secured on both sides by some piles driven into the rock. The bridge oscillated in the wind like a thread extended in space.

Clinging to the ropes, Martinez made his way across the bridge, and by a great effort he reached the opposite bank.

There, a shadow rose before him.

Martinez retreated, without saying a word, towards the bank he had just left.

There, another human form appeared.

Martinez fell upon his knees in the middle of the bridge, his hands clasped in despair.

"Martinez, I am Pablo!" said a voice.

"Martinez, I am Jacopo!" said another voice.

"You are a traitor! You shall die!"

"You are a murderer! You shall die!"

Two loud blows were heard, the piles which secured the ropes at the extremity of the bridge fell beneath the ax. A horrible shriek rent the air, and Martinez, his hands extended, was precipitated into the abyss.

A league higher up, the midshipman and the boatswain rejoined each other, after having passed by a ford the river Ixtolucca.

"I have avenged Don Orteva!" said Jacopo.

"And I," replied Pablo, "have avenged Spain!"

It was thus that the navy of the Mexican Confederation had its origin. The two Spanish ships, delivered up by the traitors, were taken possession of by the new Republic, and became the nucleus of that small fleet which fought unsuccessfully for Texas and California, against the fleet of the United States of America.

THE END.

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Five Weeks in a Balloon

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Five Weeks in a Balloon

CHAPTER I

RECEPTION OF DR. FERGUSON

ON the 14th of January, 1862, there was a very large attendance of the members of the Royal Geographical Society of London, 3 Waterloo Place. The President, Sir Francis M——, made an impromptu communication to his colleagues in a speech frequently interrupted by applause. This rare specimen of oratory ended at length with some grandiloquent phrases, in which patriotism was displayed in well-rounded sentences, thus:

"England has always appeared at the head of all other nations in the way of geographical discovery. (Hear, hear.) Doctor Samuel Ferguson, one of her glorious children, will not disgrace the land of his birth. (No, no.) If his attempt succeed (It will, it will!) it will bind together in a complete form the isolated maps of the African continent. If it fail (Never, never!) it will remain at least on record as one of the boldest conceptions of the human mind." (Loud applause.)

"Hurrah, hurrah!" shouted the assembly, quite electrified by these stirring words.

"Hurrah for the undaunted Ferguson!" cried one of the members, more enthusiastic than the rest.

The enthusiasm then rose to a high pitch. The name of Ferguson was in every mouth, and there is no reason to believe that it lost anything in its emancipation from the British throat. The whole assembly was in a ferment.

Yet there were present in that assembly a number of individuals grown old in travel: bold explorers, whose wandering disposition had led them to all parts of the world. All of them, either physically or morally, had escaped shipwreck, fire, the tomahawk of the Indian, the club of the savage, the stake, or Polynesian cannibals. But nothing could still the throbbing of their breasts dur-

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ing Sir F. M.'s speech; it was without doubt the greatest oratorical success of the Royal Geographical Society within the memory of man.

In England, enthusiasm is not by any means confined to words. It can produce money more quickly than the machinery of the Royal Mint. A sum of £2,500 was immediately voted and placed at Doctor Ferguson's disposal. The subscription was in proportion to the importance of the undertaking.

One of the members of the Society asked the President whether Doctor Ferguson might not be officially presented.

"The doctor awaits the pleasure of the meeting," replied Sir Francis M——.

"Let him come in!" they cried; "admit him! It is right that we should become acquainted with a man of such extraordinary daring."

"Perhaps," said an old apoplectic commodore, "this incredible suggestion is nothing but a hoax after all."

"I do not suppose that there is any such person," said a malicious member.

"We must invent him then," replied a joking associate.

"Request Doctor Ferguson to be good enough to come in," said Sir Francis M——, quietly.

The doctor accordingly made his appearance, and was greeted with thunders of applause. He did not, however, appear to be in the least elated by his reception. He was a man of about forty years of age, of no remarkable exterior. His sanguine temperament displayed itself in the ruddiness of his complexion. His face was impassive, with regular features and a prominent nose. This was like the prow of a vessel—the nose of a man destined for discovery. His eyes were soft, and, being more intelligent than bold, imparted a great charm to his face. His arms were long, and his feet were planted upon the floor with the firmness of a practical pedestrian. A certain quiet self-possession pervaded the doctor's whole appearance, and no one could believe him capable of the most innocent hoax.

The shouts and plaudits never for one moment ceased until Doctor Ferguson intimated his desire for silence by a gesture. He advanced towards the arm-chair prepared for his reception, then, standing perfectly upright, with a determined expression of countenance he pointed the fore-

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finger of his left hand towards the ceiling, and uttered the word "Excelsior!"

Never had an unexpected popular measure of Messrs. Cobden or Bright—never had a demand by Lord Palmerston for an extra vote to arm the English coast defenses met with equal success. The doctor was at once sublime, powerful, unassuming, and prudent. He had struck the key-note of the situation.

"Excelsior!"

The old commodore, completely "brought up in the wind" by this extraordinary man, moved that the entire speech of Doctor Ferguson be entered in the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society.

Now, who was this Doctor Ferguson, and to what enterprise was he about to devote himself? The father of Ferguson was a captain in the English merchant service, and had accustomed his son, from his earliest years, to the dangers and risks of his own profession. The brave lad, who knew not what fear meant, soon displayed an adventurous spirit and desire for information, and a remarkable predilection for scientific research. He also showed a wonderful aptitude for getting out of scrapes, and he was never embarrassed, not even when using a fork for the first time, in which attempt children are not generally successful.

As he grew older, his imagination became stimulated by tales of hairbreadth escapes and records of maritime discovery. He followed diligently the routes of those travelers who made the first part of the nineteenth century famous in history. He longed for the glories of Mungo Park, of Bruce, Caillé, and Levaillant, and even of Selkirk and Robinson Crusoe, which were to him in no way inferior. How many happy hours had he passed in the Island of Juan Fernandez? He sometimes approved of the ideas of the shipwrecked sailor, sometimes he denied the propriety of his plans and projects. He would himself have acted differently, to better effect perhaps, or at least as well, at any rate.

However, one thing was certain: he would never have quitted that pleasant island, where he would have been as happy as a king without subjects—no, not if they had offered to make him First Lord of the Admiralty!

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I leave my readers to judge how these tendencies developed themselves during the adventurous days passed in all quarters of the globe. His father, an educated man, did not fail to further consolidate this quickness of intelligence by some serious study—hydrography, physics, and mechanics, with a trifle of botany, medicine, and astronomy thrown in. At the death of the worthy captain, Samuel Ferguson, then twenty-two years old, had already been round the world. He joined a regiment of Bengal Engineers, and distinguished himself on several occasions. But a soldier's life did not suit him. He did not like his commanding officer, and obedience was irksome, so he obtained his discharge, and, sometimes hunting, sometimes botanising, he made his way towards the North of India, and crossed it from Calcutta to Surat. Just a pleasant walk—nothing more.

From Surat he went to Australia, and in 1845 took part in Captain Stuart's expedition to discover that Caspian Sea which is supposed to exist in the interior of New Holland. In 1850 Samuel Ferguson returned to England, and more than ever possessed by the desire of discovery, in 1853 he accompanied Captain M'Clure in the expedition that traversed the American Continent from Behring's Strait to Cape Farewell.

Despite hardships and change of climate, Ferguson's constitution remained unimpaired. He lived at ease in the midst of the greatest privations. He was the type of a perfect traveler, whose appetite can be controlled at will, whose limbs can adapt themselves equally to a bed whether it be long or short, who can sleep at any hour of the day, and awake at any hour of the night. So there was nothing very astonishing in finding our indefatigable traveler engaged, during the years 1855 to 1857, in exploring the west of Thibet, in company with the brothers Schlagintweit, whence he brought back many curious ethnographical records.

During these several expeditions Samuel Ferguson was the most active and interesting correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, a penny journal, whose circulation is 140,000 copies a day, and scarcely suffices for millions of readers. Thus the doctor was very well known, although he was not a member of any scientific institution, neither of the Royal Geographical Society of London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, or

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St. Petersburg; nor of the Travelers' Club; nor even of the Polytechnic Institution, presided over by his friend Kockburn, the statistician. This gentleman proposed to him one day the following problem, with the intention to pay him a compliment: "Given the number of miles traversed by the doctor round the world, how much farther had the head moved than the feet in consequence of the difference in the length of radii." But Ferguson kept aloof from such learned people, and being rather of the acting and not of the talking disposition, he found his time better employed in exploration than in argument, in discovery rather than discussion.

It has been related that an Englishman came to Geneva with the intention to view the Lake. He got into one of those old carriages in which people sit at the sides like in an omnibus. Now it happened that this Englishman was seated with his back to the Lake. The carriage peacefully accomplished its round without his ever turning his head; and he returned home, charmed with the Lake of Geneva!

But Doctor Ferguson *had* turned round, and more than once during his travels, and to such purpose that he had seen nearly everything. In this, as in other things, he obeyed the dictates of his nature, and we have reason to believe that he was somewhat of a fatalist, but of a very orthodox pattern, relying upon himself as well as upon Providence. He used to say that he was impelled rather than attracted to his expeditions, and ran about the world something like a locomotive which does not direct its own course, but is directed by the route it follows.

"I do not pursue my way," the doctor would remark; "my way pursues me."

It is not astonishing, therefore, that he received the plaudits of the Royal Society without any show of emotion. He was superior to that, and being neither proud nor vain, he perceived nothing extraordinary in the proposition he had made to the President, and did not appear to notice the great effect he had produced.

After the meeting was dissolved the doctor was conducted to the Travelers' Club in Pall Mall, where a splendid banquet was prepared in his honor, the dimensions of the various dishes being proportionate to the importance of the guest, and the sturgeon, which was a prominent figure in

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this magnificent repast, was only three inches shorter than Samuel Ferguson himself.

Numerous toasts were proposed to the healths of those celebrated travelers who had distinguished themselves on the soil of Africa, and duly honored. They drank to their healths in alphabetical order. To Abbadie, Adams, Adamson, Anderson, Arnaud, Baikie, Baldwin, Barth, Batouder, Beke, Beltram de Berba, Bimbachi, Bolognesi, Bolwick, Bolzoni, Bonnemain, Brisson, Browne, Bruce, Brun-Rollet, Burchell, Burckhardt, Burton, Caillaud, Caillé, Campbell, Chapman, Clapperton, Clot-Bey, Colomieu, Courvall, Cumming, Cuny, Debono, Decken, Denham, Desavanchers, Dicksen, Dickson, Dochard, Du Chaillu, Duncan, Durand, Duroule, Duveyrier, Erhard, d'Escayrac de Lauteur, Ferret, Fresnel, Galinier, Galton, Geoffroy, Golberry, Hahn, Halm, Harnier, Hecquart, Heuglin, Hornemann, Houghton, Imbert, Kaufmann, Knoblecher, Krapf, Kummer, Lafargue, Laing, Lajaillé, Lambert, Lamiral, Lamprière, John Lander, Richard Lander, Lefebvre, Lejean, Levaillant, Livingstone, Maccarthy, Maggiar, Maizan, Malzac, Moffat, Mollieu, Monteiro, Morrisson, Mungo Park, Neimans, Overweg, Panet, Partarrieau, Pascal, Pearse, Peddie, Peney, Petherick, Poncet, Prax, Raffenel, Rath, Rebmann, Richardson, Riley, Ritchie, Rochet d'Héricourt, Rongawi, Roscher, Ruppel, Saugnier, Speke, Steidner, Thibaud, Thompson, Thornton, Toole, Tousny, Trotter, Tuckey, Tyrwitt, Vaudey, Veyssière, Vincent, Vinco, Vogel, Wahlberg, Warrington, Washington, Werne, Wild, and lastly to Doctor Samuel Ferguson, who, by his unheard-of project, was about to bind together the works of all these travelers, and complete the series of African discoveries.

CHAPTER II

AN ARTICLE IN THE "TELEGRAPH"

In its issue of the next day, the *Daily Telegraph* published the following article:

"Africa is about to yield the secret of its vast solitudes at last. A modern Œdipus will find the key to the problem which the learned of sixteen centuries have not been able to solve. Formerly, to seek the sources of the Nile—*fontes*

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Nili quærere—was regarded as the act of a madman; a chimera, in fact.

"Doctor Barth, by following as far as Soudan the route traversed by Denham and Clapperton; Doctor Livingstone, by extending his undaunted researches from the Cape of Good Hope to the basin of the Zambezi; Burton and Speke, by the discovery of the Great Inland Lakes, have opened up three routes to modern civilization. To the point of intersection of these routes, no traveler has hitherto been able to penetrate; it is in the very heart of Africa. It is to that point that all our efforts should be directed.

"The works of these hardy pioneers of science are now about to be supplemented by the spirited attempt of Dr. Samuel Ferguson, whose wonderful expeditions have so often been appreciated by our readers. This hardy explorer proposes to cross the continent of Africa from east to west in a balloon. If we have been correctly informed, the point of departure of this extraordinary enterprise will be the island of Zanzibar upon the eastern coast. Where the point of arrival will prove to be—Heaven alone can tell!

"This exploit was yesterday proposed officially to the members of the Royal Geographical Society, and a sum of £2,500 was voted to defray the expenses of the expedition. We will keep our readers duly informed upon the various events in connection with the projected enterprise, which is without precedent in geographical annals."

This article, as was intended, had an enormous circulation. It first aroused a tempest of incredulity, and Doctor Ferguson was looked upon as a visionary, an invention of Barnum, who, having exhausted the United States, was about to *do* the British Isles!

A quizzical notice appeared in Geneva in the February number of the *Proceedings of the Geographical Society*, which gently rallied the Royal Society in London, the Travelers' Club, and the wonderful sturgeon. But Mr. Petermann, in his *Mitheilungen*, published in Gotha, shut up the Geneva paper completely. Mr. Petermann was acquainted with Dr. Ferguson, and bore testimony to the hardihood of his (Petermann's) courageous friend.

Soon, however, doubt was no longer possible. Preparations for the expedition were being made in London. Firms at Lyons had received orders for striped taffetas for

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the balloon, and the English Government had placed a transport, the *Resolute,* commanded by Captain Penney, at the disposal of Dr. Ferguson. Encouragement and good wishes were showered from all sides. The details of the enterprise appeared in the *Transactions* of the Geographical Society of Paris. A very remarkable article was published in the *Nouvelles Annales des Voyages de la Géographie, de l'Histoire, et de l'Archéologie,* by M. V. A. Malte-Brun. A particular account was published in the *Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Erdkunde,* by Dr. W. Koner, demonstrating the possibility of the journey, its chances of success, the nature of the obstacles to be encountered, and the immense advantages of locomotion by means of balloons. He found fault only with the place of departure, and hinted that Masuah, a small port of Abyssinia, whence James Bruce started in his search for the sources of the Nile, would be preferable. In all other respects, he applauded unreservedly the wonderful energy of Dr. Ferguson, and the stout brain and heart that could conceive and execute such an enterprise.

The *North American Review* was rather annoyed that so much honor was likely to fall to the lot of a "Britisher." It accordingly ridiculed the whole proceeding, and suggested that the doctor should go over to America while he was about it.

In fact, not to go further into detail, there was not a scientific periodical, from the *Journal of the Church Missionary Society,* to the *Algerine and Colonial Review;* from the *Annals of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel,* to the *Church Mission Intelligencer,* which did not discuss the subject in all its bearings. Some considerable bets were made in London, and in England generally. 1. Upon the actual existence of Dr. Ferguson. 2. Upon the journey itself, which some said would never be entered upon, some declaring the contrary. 3. Whether it would succeed or fail. 4. On the probabilities of the Doctor's return. Immense sums were betted on those issues, as freely as at Epsom Races.

Thus believers, skeptics, the ignorant, and the learned, all had their attention fixed on the doctor. He was the lion of the day, without his even suspecting that he carried a name. He willingly gave information respecting the ex-

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pedition. He was easily accessible, and the most unaffected man in the world. Many a bold adventurer called upon him with the object of being permitted to share the glory and perils of the undertaking, but the doctor always declined, without giving any reason for his refusal. Many patentees came to him to propose their plans to direct the course of balloons; he would accept none of them. To those who inquired whether he had discovered anything of that nature for himself, he refused explanation, and turned to the completion of his arrangements with greater diligence than ever.

CHAPTER III

THE DOCTOR'S FRIEND

DOCTOR FERGUSON possessed a friend. Not another self, an *alter ego*—friendship cannot exist between two people of like disposition. But if Dick Kennedy and Samuel Ferguson possessed different qualities, tastes, and temperaments, they possessed the same heart, and that did not embarrass them in the least. Quite the contrary!

Dick Kennedy was a Scotchman, in the true acceptation of the term. He was honest, resolute, and obstinate. He lived at Leith, a suburb of "Auld Reekie." He was something of a fisherman, but above all and everything an indefatigable sportsman, which was the less astonishing in a Scot somewhat accustomed to roam the Highlands. He was quoted as a wonderful shot with the rifle, for not only could he split a bullet on the blade of a knife, but could divide it into two such equal parts that, when weighed, there was no perceptible difference between them.

In appearance Kennedy resembled Halbert Glendinning, as pictured by Walter Scott in the "Monastery." He was more than six feet high, of graceful and easy bearing. He appeared to be gifted with Herculean strength. His face was bronzed by exposure to the sun, his eyes were black and piercing. He possessed a naturally fearless temperament, and, in fact, everything about him prepossessed one in his favor.

The two friends had become acquainted in India, where they were serving in the same regiment. While Dick used to hunt the tiger and the elephant, Samuel was occupied in

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the pursuit of plants or insects. Each was an adept in his own line, and many a rare plant became the prey of the doctor, which cost as much to obtain as a pair of ivory tusks. These young people had never any occasion to save each other's life, nor to render any service whatever to each other. But a strong friendship existed between them. Fate might part them perhaps, but Friendship would always unite them again. Since their return to England they had frequently been separated in consequence of the long expeditions undertaken by the doctor, but upon his return he never failed to spend some weeks with his friend the Scotchman.

Dick talked of the past, Samuel prepared for the future. The one looked ahead, the other looked back. Ferguson was of a restless disposition, Kennedy was perfectly contented. For two years after his travels in Thibet the doctor did not speak of any new expeditions. Dick thought that his friend's taste for traveling, and his appetite for adventure, had been satisfied. He was delighted. That kind of thing is sure to end badly some day or other, he thought, whatever experience one has had of people; one cannot travel with impunity among cannibals and wild beasts. Kennedy, therefore, begged Samuel to "put the drag on" a bit, he having already done quite enough for science, and too much for human gratitude.

To this request the doctor made no reply, he remained buried in thought. Then he went to work again at his secret calculations, passing whole nights in working out his figures, and experimentalising upon curious machines of which no one knew anything. People, therefore, fancied that he had conceived some very grand notion in his busy brain.

"I wonder what he is thinking about," said Kennedy, when his friend had left him and returned to London in January. He made the discovery one morning in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*.

"Good Heavens!" he cried, "the idiot, to think of crossing Africa in a balloon! This was all that was necessary to complete his vagaries! That is, then, what he has been thinking of these two years!"

If the reader will kindly substitute for the foregoing notes of exclamation certain hard blows of Kennedy's fist ap-

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plied to his own head, he will have some slight idea of the gentle exercise indulged in by Dick as he spoke.

When his housekeeper, old Elspeth, gently suggested that perhaps there might yet be nothing in it after all, he cried, "Why, don't you think I know the man? Is it not he all over? Going to travel through the air, indeed! He will be jealous of the eagles now! But, by Jove, this shall not be if I can prevent it. If you only leave him to himself, he will be setting off some fine morning up to the moon!" The same evening, Kennedy, half angry, half uneasy, took the train at the General Railway Station, and next morning arrived in London.

Three-quarters of an hour afterwards a cab left him at the door of the doctor's house in Greek Street, Soho; ascending the steps he knocked loudly five times.

Ferguson himself opened the door. "Why, Dick?" he exclaimed, apparently not much surprised at his friend's appearance.

"Yes, Dick himself," replied Kennedy.

"My dear Dick, how is it that you are up in town when the hunting is going on?"

"Yes, I am in London."

"And why have you come up?"

"To prevent a foolish action."

"A foolish action?" echoed the doctor.

"Is this true?" asked Kennedy, holding out the article in the *Daily Telegraph* for his friend's inspection.

"Ah! that is what you are driving at. How very indiscreet these newspapers are. But take a chair, Dick, old fellow."

"No, I shan't," said Dick. "Then you are quite determined to undertake this journey?"

"Quite. My arrangements are being made, and I——"

"Your arrangements! I should like to knock your arrangements to pieces." The worthy Scot was waxing very angry.

"Calm yourself, my dear Dick," said the doctor. "I can understand your irritation. You are vexed because I have not sooner made you acquainted with my new plans."

"He talks of new plans, indeed!"

"I have been very busy," continued Samuel, without noticing the interruption; "there has been so much to do.

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But rest assured I should not have gone without writing to you——"

"Ah! you are making a fool of me now."

"Because I had intended to get you to accompany me."

The Scot gave a bound that would have done credit to a chamois. "Ah, that, indeed," said he; "then I suppose you wish us both to be shut up in Bedlam together?"

"I have positively counted upon you, my dear Dick, and have chosen you to the exclusion of everybody else."

Kennedy remained in a state of stupefaction. "When you have listened to me for about ten minutes," continued the doctor, quietly, "you will thank me."

"Are you serious?"

"Perfectly."

"And suppose I refuse to go with you?"

"But you will not refuse."

"Yet if I do?"

"I shall go alone, that's all."

"Look here; let us sit down," said the Scot, "and talk this business over calmly. If you are not joking, it is worth our while to discuss it."

"Well, then, let us discuss it at breakfast, if you have no objection, my dear Dick."

The two friends accordingly sat down, a great plate of sandwiches, and an enormous teapot between them. "My dear Sam," said the sportsman, "your project is a foolish one; it is impossible. There is nothing tangible nor practicable in it."

"We shall see, after we have attempted it."

"But that is not the point. It is not necessary to try it."

"Why not, if you please?"

"Why, look at the dangers and obstacles of all kinds involved in it."

"Obstacles," replied Ferguson seriously, "are only invented to be overcome; as for danger, who can ever escape it? Life is made up of dangers. It is, perhaps, very dangerous to sit down at this table, or to put on one's hat; we must, however, look upon what is likely to happen as having already happened, and see only the present in the future; for the future is merely the present a little farther off."

"What!" cried Kennedy, shrugging his shoulders, "so you are still a fatalist?"

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"Always, but in the good sense of the term. We need not, therefore, worry ourselves about the fate in store for us; let us not forget the proverb, 'He that is born to be hanged will never be drowned.'"

There was obviously no direct reply to be made to this, but that fact did not prevent Kennedy from producing a series of arguments easy to imagine, but too long to repeat here. "But, after all," he said, after about an hour's discussion, "if you really must cross Africa, and if it is necessary for your happiness to do so, why don't you go by the ordinary routes?"

"Why?" replied the doctor with animation, "because all such attempts have failed. Because from Mungo Park murdered on the Niger, till the time when Vogel disappeared in the Wadaï; from Oudney dead at Murmur, Clapperton at Sackatou, to the time when Maizan was cut to pieces; from the period that Major Laing was killed by the Touaregs to the massacre of Roscher in the beginning of the year 1860, such a number of victims have had their names written in the record of African martyrdom. Because, to fight against the elements, against hunger, thirst, fever, and wild animals, and tribes even more ferocious, is impossible. Because that which cannot be accomplished one way must be accomplished in another. Finally, because when one is unable to pass *through* a place, one must pass either at the side of it or over it."

"If it were only a question of getting across," replied Kennedy; "but to pass over the top——"

"Well," said the doctor, with the greatest coolness, "what have I to fear? You will confess that I have taken precautions to guard against a fall from my balloon. If, however, such a thing did happen, I should only then be in the normal condition of travelers; but my balloon will not fail me, so we need not speak of that."

"On the contrary, we must consider that point."

"Not so, my dear Dick; I have quite made up my mind not to part from it until we have reached the western coast of Africa. With it everything is possible, without it I fall into all the dangers and difficulties of former expeditions. With my balloon I need fear neither heat nor cold, torrent nor tempest, simoom nor unhealthy climates, wild beasts nor men. If I feel too hot, I can ascend; if I feel cold, I

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can come down again; is there a mountain, I can pass over it; a precipice, I can clear it; a river, I can cross it; a storm, I can go above it; a torrent, I can skim over it like a bird; I can travel without fatigue; I can stop without having need to repose; I can overlook new cities; I can fly with the rapidity of a hurricane. Sometimes high up in the air, sometimes within a few feet of the earth, and the whole of Africa will be mapped out beneath my eyes in the great atlas of the world."

The brave Kennedy was impressed, notwithstanding that the prospects spread before his mind's eyes made him feel somewhat giddy. He gazed at Samuel with admiration, not unmixed with fear, and felt as if he were already suspended in space.

"Let us see about this, my dear Samuel. Have you discovered any means to direct the balloon?"

"Not one. It is a Utopian idea altogether."

"But you will nevertheless go?"

"Where Providence may will, but all the same from east to west!"

"Why so?"

"Because I count upon the trade-winds to assist me; their direction is invariable."

"Oh, indeed," muttered Kennedy; "the trade-winds, certainly—they might for once in a way—there is something——"

"Something! No, my dear friend, there is *everything* in it. The Government have placed a transport at my disposal. It has also been agreed that three or four vessels shall proceed to the western side about the anticipated time of my arrival there. In three months, at farthest, I shall be at Zanzibar, where I shall set about the inflation of my balloon, and we shall start from there."

"We!" exclaimed Dick.

"Have you then any objection to make? Speak, friend Kennedy."

"One objection! I have a thousand. But, between ourselves, tell me if you count upon seeing the country; if you intend to ascend and descend at will, you must expend a quantity of gas, and there are no other means of proceeding. It is this fact which has hitherto prevented any long journeys through the air."

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"My dear Dick, I shall only tell you one thing. I shall not lose an atom of gas—not a particle."

"And you will descend when you please?"

"I will descend when I please."

"And how will you manage this?"

"That is my secret, friend Richard. Have faith in me, and my motto may be yours—'Excelsior!'"

"Agreed. 'Excelsior' be it," replied the hunter, who did not understand a word of Latin. But he made up his mind to offer all the opposition in his power to the departure of his friend. He pretended to be of his opinion, and contented himself with watching. As for the doctor, he went to inspect his preparations.

CHAPTER IV

AFRICAN EXPLORATION

THE direction which Dr. Ferguson intended to follow in his balloon had not been chosen at hap-hazard. He had seriously considered his point of departure, and it was not without reason that he had resolved to ascend from the island of Zanzibar.

This island, situated close to the east coast of Africa, is in the 6th degree of South latitude, or 430 geographical miles below the equator. The last expedition which went by way of the great lakes to discover the source of the Nile started from Zanzibar.

But perhaps it may be as well to mention what expeditions Doctor Ferguson was hoping to connect together. There were two principal ones—that of Doctor Barth in 1849, and that of Lieutenants Burton and Speke in 1858.

Doctor Barth was a native of Hamburg, who obtained permission for himself and for his countryman, Overweg, to join the English expedition under Richardson, who was charged with a mission into the Soudan. This immense district is situated between the 15th and 10th degrees of North latitude; that is to say, that to arrive there it is necessary to travel more than 1,500 miles into the interior of Africa. Up to the period mentioned the country was only known from the expeditions of Denham, Clapperton, and Oudney, between the years 1822 and 1824.

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Richardson, Barth, and Overweg, desirous of pushing their researches farther, went to Tunis and Tripoli, like their predecessors, and penetrated to Mourzouk, the capital of Fezzan. They then quitted the direct line of march and made a detour to the west, towards Ghât, guided, and not without difficulty, by the Touaregs. After undergoing a thousand perils and attacks, their caravan arrived, in October, at the great oasis of the Asben. Here Doctor Barth separated himself from his companions and made an excursion to the town of Aghades. Rejoining the expedition, it marched again on the 12th December, and having reached the province of Damaghou, the three travelers separated. Barth took the route to Kano, where he eventually arrived in safety, thanks to his indomitable patience and the payment of considerable tribute.

In spite of a severe attack of fever, he quitted Kano on the 7th of March, accompanied only by one servant. The principal aim of his journey was to explore Lake Tchad, from which he was distant 350 miles. He advanced, therefore, in an easterly direction, and reached Zouricolo, in the Bornou, which town is the capital of the great central empire of Africa.

It was there that he heard of Richardson's death caused by fatigue and privation. Passing on, he reached Kouka, the capital of Bornou, situated on the Lake. At length, after a further period of three weeks, on the 14th of April, twelve months and a half after quitting Tripoli, he arrived at the town of Ngornou.

We find him once more in company with Overweg, starting on the 29th March, 1851, to visit the kingdom of Adamaon, at the south side of the Lake. He succeeded in reaching Yola, a little below the 9th degree of North latitude. That was the extreme southerly point reached by this intrepid traveler.

In August he returned to Kouka, thence he reached in succession Mandara, Berghimi, and Kanem, attaining his eastern limit at Mazena in 17° 20′ W. long.

In November, 1852, after the death of Overweg, his latest companion, he plunged into the west, visited Sockoto, crossed the Niger, and finally arrived at Timbuctoo, where he was obliged to languish for eight tedious months, exposed to incessant annoyance by the sheik, to ill-treatment,

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and wretchedness. But the presence of a Christian in the town could not be tolerated longer, and the Foullaunes threatened to beset him.

So the doctor departed on the 17th March, 1854, and sought refuge on the frontier, where he remained thirty-three days in terrible destitution. He returned to Kano in November, and thence to Kouka. Here he struck the former route of Denham, after four months' detention. About the end of the year 1855 he got back to Tripoli, and reached London on the 6th September, the sole survivor of his party. Such was the extraordinary journey of Barth.

Doctor Ferguson had noted carefully that Barth did not penetrate beyond 4° N. lat. and 17° W. long.

Now let us see what Burton and Speke accomplished in Eastern Africa.

The various expeditions which ascended the Nile were all unable to reach its source, apparently shrouded in mystery. According to the account of the German doctor, Ferdinand Werne, the expedition projected in 1840, under the auspices of Mehamet Ali, was stopped at Gondokoro between the 4th and 5th parallels of N. lat.

In 1855 Brun-Rollet, a Savoyard, Sardinian consul in the Soudan in the place of Vauday, who had been killed, quitted Karthoum, and, in the disguise of a merchant dealing in gum and ivory, he reached Belenia just beyond 4°, and returned to Karthoum sick. He died there in 1857.

Neither Doctor Beney, chief of the Egyptian Medical Service, who in a small steamer reached to one degree below Gondokoro, and returned to die of exhaustion at Karthoum; nor the Venetian Miani, who, by avoiding the cataracts below Gondokoro, touched the second parallel; nor the Maltese merchant, Andrea Debono, who pushed on farther still, was able to pass that insurmountable barrier.

In 1859, M. Guillaume Lejean, sent out by the French Government, reached Karthoum by way of the Red Sea, and embarked on the Nile with a crew of twenty-one men and twenty soldiers, but he could not get beyond Gondokoro, and incurred the greatest danger from the negro tribes, then in full revolt. The expedition under the direction of M. Escayrac de Lauture made an equally vain attempt to reach these famous sources.

That fatal barrier always stopped would-be explorers.

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The people sent by Nero had in his time reached the 9th degree of latitude, so in 1800 years we have only gained five or six degrees, or about 300 to 360 geographical miles.

Many travelers have attempted to reach the sources of the Nile from the west side of the continent. During the years 1768-72, the Scotchman, Bruce, departing from Masuah, a port of Abyssinia, sailed up the Tigris, visited the ruins of Axum, actually beheld the sources of the Nile where they did not exist, and returned without obtaining any other remarkable success.

In 1844, Doctor Krapf, an Anglican missionary, established a station at Monbez on the coast of Zanguebar, and discovered, in company with the Reverend Mr. Rebmann, two mountains at a distance of 300 miles from the coast. These are Kilimandjaro and Kenia, that Heuglin and Thornton ascended together.

In 1845, Maizan, a Frenchman, disembarked alone at Bazamaye, opposite Zanzibar, and got as far as Deje la Mhora, where he was put to death with cruel tortures.

In 1859, in the month of August, Roscher, of Hamburg, a young traveler, set out with a caravan of Arab merchants, and reached Lake Nyassa, where he was murdered in his sleep.

Finally, in 1857, Lieutenants Burton and Speke, both officers of the Bengal army, were dispatched by the Geographical Society of London, to explore the great African Lakes. On the 17th of June they quitted Zanzibar, and directed their course to the west.

After four months of incredible suffering, their baggage pillaged, their porters worn out and dispirited, they arrived at Kazeh, the meeting center for merchants and caravans. They were in the true land of the moon. There they collected many valuable documents respecting the manners, government, religion, and the fauna and flora of the country.

Thence they journeyed towards the first of the great lakes, Tanganyika, situated between the 3° and 8° of South latitude. They reached it on the 14th of February, 1858, and made themselves acquainted with the various tribes along its banks, who were chiefly cannibals. Leaving the lake on the 20th May, they re-entered Kazeh on the 20th June. Here Burton, quite knocked up, remained ill for

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several months, and during that time Speke traveled northwards more than 300 miles, as far as Lake Onkéreoné, which he sighted on the 13th August, but could only see the opening of it in 2° 30′ longtitude. He then returned to Kazeh on the 25th, and with Burton retraced his steps to Zanzibar, which they reached in March of the following year. These two intrepid travelers then came back to England, and the Geographical Society of Paris bestowed upon them its annual prize.

Doctor Ferguson had also carefully noted that they had not passed either the 2° of South latitude nor the 29° longitude East.

He therefore set himself to the task of joining the discoveries of Burton and Speke to those of Doctor Barth, and to pass over a tract of country extending to more than twelve degrees.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAP OF AFRICA

Doctor Ferguson kept pressing forward the preparations for his departure; he personally directed the construction of his balloon, following out certain modifications, respecting which he maintained an absolute silence.

For some time previously, he had been applying himself to the study of Arabic, and of various *patois*, and thanks to his arrangement of the dialects, he made rapid progress.

In the meantime, his friend never left him for a moment; he was doubtless apprehensive that the doctor would take flight, and he still brought to bear upon the subject his most persuasive arguments, which had no effect whatever upon Samuel Ferguson, who would endeavor to escape under cover of the most moving entreaties, by which he appeared little touched himself. Dick felt that he was slipping through his fingers.

The unfortunate Scot was really to be pitied; he could never think of the azure vault of Heaven without a fit of the "blues"; he realized, when asleep, the giddy suspension, and every night he felt as if he were falling from an immense height.

We ought to state that, while under these terrible night-

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mares, he fell out of bed once or twice. His first notion was to exhibit a great contusion on his head.

"There," he said, with a smile, "look at that, and only caused by a fall of three feet. Now, what do you think?"

This insinuation, full of sadness though it was, had no effect upon the doctor.

"We shall not fall out," he said slyly.

"But suppose we *do*?"

"We shall not, I tell you."

This was decisive, and Kennedy had nothing to say.

What particularly aggravated Dick was that the doctor appeared completely to ignore his (Dick's) individuality, and looked upon him as fated to become his aërial companion. There was not a shadow of doubt about that.

Samuel was accustomed to make a shameful abuse of the first person plural.

"We" go. "We" shall be ready. "We" shall leave. And then the adjective (possessive)—"Our" balloon. "Our" boat. "Our" undertaking. And again in the plural—"Our" preparations. "Our" discoveries. "Our" ascents.

Dick shuddered at all this, although determined not to stir, but he did not wish to thwart his friend. Let us confess, indeed, that, without saying anything about it, he had caused some clothes and his best rifles to be forwarded to him secretly from Edinburgh.

One day, having gone so far as to confess that, with good luck, one might have a chance of success, he pretended to agree with the doctor, but in order to delay the journey, he quoted a number of the most wonderfully varied and hairbreadth escapes. He fell back upon the use and expediency of the journey. Was it really a necessity to discover the sources of the Nile? Would their work really prove of benefit to the human race? Suppose, after all, the tribes of Africa should be civilized, how much better off will they be then? Was it by any means certain, moreover, that they were not already as civilized as Europe? Perhaps so. And, in the first place, why couldn't they wait a little longer? Surely Africa could be crossed one day in a less dangerous fashion? In a month, in six months, before the year was out, some explorer would indubitably present himself.

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These insinuations produced an effect the very opposite to the speaker's wishes, and the doctor quivered with impatience.

"Do you wish, then, you unhappy man, that this glory shall be shared with someone else? Is it, then, necessary to fib about it; to enlarge upon obstacles which are not serious; to repay, by cowardly hesitation, what has been done for me by the Government and the Royal Society?"

"But," replied Kennedy, who was very much addicted to the use of this word.

"But!" echoed the doctor, "do not you know that my journey ought to contribute to the success of enterprises already undertaken? Are you not aware that fresh expeditions are advancing into the center of Africa?"

"Still——"

"Listen to me, Dick. Just look at this map."

Dick regarded it with a resigned expression.

"Follow up the course of the Nile——"

"I am following it," replied the Scot resignedly.

"Have you reached Gondokoro?"

"I am there." And Kennedy thought how easy it would be to make a similar voyage—on a map.

"Now," said the doctor, "place one of the points upon that town which the bravest travelers have with difficulty passed."

"I have fixed it."

"And now look on the coast line for the island of Zanzibar in the 6th degree of south latitude."

"I have got it."

"Follow now this parallel and you arrive at Kazet."

"All right."

"Now go up by the 33rd degree of longitude as far as the commencement of Lake Onkéreoné, at the spot where Lieutenant Speke halted."

"I am there. I shall be in the lake in a minute."

"Now do you know what is the natural deduction from the information gathered from the tribes on the borders of the lake?"

"I have not the faintest notion."

"It is that this lake, whose lower end is in 2° 30′ latitude, ought to extend equally two and a half degrees above the equator."

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"Really?"

"Now, from this northern extremity runs a stream which ought to flow into the Nile, if it be not the Nile itself."

"That is extremely interesting."

"Now place the other point of that compass on this extremity of the lake"

"It is done," said Ferguson.

"How many degrees do you make it between the points?"

"Scarcely two."

"Do you know how far that is, Dick?"

"Haven't an idea!"

"It is but 120 miles; a mere nothing."

"Well, scarcely nothing, Samuel."

"Now, do you know what is actually taking place at this moment?"

"No, upon my life, I don't.

"Well, the Geographical Society considers it very important that this lake, discovered by Speke, should be explored. Under its direction, Lieutenant, now Captain, Speke has joined with Captain Grant of the Indian Army; they have been put at the head of a numerous caravan, and with ample funds. They have been commissioned to go up the lake, and to return as far as Gondokoro. They have been subsidized to the amount of £5,000, and the Governor of the Cape has placed Hottentot soldiers under their orders. They left Zanzibar at the end of October, 1860. During this time, John Petherick, H. M. Consul at Karthoum, has received from the Foreign Office about £700. He has orders to provide a steamer, and, with a plentiful supply of provisions, to proceed to Gondokoro, there to await the arrival of Captain Speke's party, and to assist them if necessary."

"That is a well-conceived plan," said Kennedy.

"You can now perceive that we have no time to lose if we would participate in this expedition. And that is not all; while they are marching on foot to discover the sources of the Nile, other travelers are bravely penetrating into the very heart of Africa."

"On foot?" exclaimed Kennedy incredulously.

"Yes," replied the doctor, without noticing the insinuation. "Doctor Krapf proposes to push towards the west

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by the Djob, a river below the Equator. Baron Decken has left Monbaz, and revisited the mountains Kenia and Kilimandjaro, and is still advancing towards the interior."

"Also on foot?"

"Either on foot or with mules."

"All the same as far as I am concerned," replied Kennedy.

"Finally," continued the doctor, "M. Heuglin, the Austrian vice-consul at Karthoum, is about to organize a very important expedition, of which the chief aim will be the search for the explorer Vogel, who, in 1853, was sent into the Soudan to join forces with Dr. Barth. In 1856 he quitted Bornou, resolved to explore the unknown region which extends between Lake Tchad and Darfour. Since then he has not been heard of. Letters arrived in 1860 at Alexandria stating that he had been assassinated by the orders of the King of Wadai, but subsequent communications addressed by Dr. Hartmann to Vogel's father, that, according to the report of a fellatah of Bornou, Vogel was only kept a prisoner at Wara; all hope, therefore, is not lost. A committee has been formed under the presidency of the Regent of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. My friend Petermann is the secretary. A national subscription has been set on foot to support the expedition, to which several *savants* have already attached themselves. M. Heuglin left Masuah in June, and while he searches for Vogel, he has instructions to explore the country lying between the Nile and Lake Tchad, that is to say, to connect the discoveries of Speke and Barth, and then Africa will have been crossed from east to west!"

"Well," said the Scot, "as that is all so nicely arranged I don't see what there is for us to do."

Doctor Ferguson made no reply to this beyond a shrug of his shoulders.

CHAPTER VI

A RARE SERVANT

Doctor Ferguson had a man-servant who rejoiced in the name of Joe. An excellent fellow, entirely devoted to his master, and serving him with a boundless attention. Some-

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times he even anticipated his orders, and carried them out with the greatest intelligence. Never grumbling, and always in good humor, people said that, had he been made on purpose, he could not have been better.

Ferguson placed himself in Joe's hands entirely and rightly. Rare and honest Joe! A servant who orders your dinner exactly to your taste, who packs your portmanteau and never forgets the shirts and socks, who keeps your keys and your secrets, and never gives up either.

But what a master the doctor was to Joe! With what respect and confidence he welcomed his decisions! When Ferguson had spoken, it would be folly to reply. All that he thought was right; everything he said was correct; all that he ordered to be done, feasible; all he undertook was possible; all that he accomplished, magnificent! You might have cut Joe in pieces, which would have been, doubtless, very unpleasant, but he would not have changed his opinion respecting his master. Thus, when the doctor broached the project of crossing Africa in a balloon, Joe looked upon the feat as already accomplished; no obstacles existed for him. As soon as the doctor had resolved to set out, he would be there with his faithful servant of course; for the brave lad, without ever having mentioned the subject, knew very well that he would be of the party. He would, besides, be able to render important service, in consequence of his activity and intelligence. If it had been necessary to appoint a professor of gymnastics to the monkeys in the Zoölogical Gardens, who are pretty lively now, Joe would certainly have obtained the situation. To jump, climb, to impel himself through the air, to execute a thousand almost impossible antics, was child's play to Joe.

If Ferguson was the head and Kennedy the arm, Joe was certainly the right hand. He had already traveled a great deal with his master, and possessed some smattering of science suitable to his position, but he distinguished himself above all by a philosophic calmness, and a charming talent for looking on the bright side. Everything to him was easy, logical, and natural, and consequently he never complained nor swore.

Besides these attributes he possessed a most astonishing range of vision. He, equally with Moestlin, Kepler's teacher, enjoyed the curious faculty of being able to see

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the moons of Jupiter with the naked eye, and to count fourteen stars in the Pleiades, which last are of the ninth magnitude. He was not proud of this at all; on the contrary, he would salute you respectfully, and, on occasion, he could make use of his eyes to some purpose.

With the confidence Joe displayed towards the doctor, it is not astonishing that frequent discussions would arise between Kennedy and the worthy domestic, with all due regard to their relative positions.

One doubted, the other had faith; one represented a clear-sighted prudence, the other, blind confidence. So the doctor was situated between skepticism and belief, and, I am bound to add, he paid no attention to either.

"Well, Mr. Kennedy," said Joe.

"Well, my lad."

"The time is approaching. It seems that we are about to set off to the moon."

"You mean the land of the moon, which is not quite so far, but quite sufficiently dangerous; so be easy in your mind."

"Dangerous! with a man like Doctor Ferguson?"

"I do not wish to dissipate your delusions, my good Joe, but his enterprise is simple madness. He will never enter upon it."

"Not go? Then you haven't seen the balloon in the workshop of Messrs. Mitchell, in the Borough?"

"I shall take very good care not to go to see it."

"Then you will lose a splendid sight, sir. What a beautiful thing it is; what a lovely shape, and what a charming car! How jolly we shall all be in it!"

"Then you have really made up your mind to accompany your master?"

"I!" replied Joe decisively. "I would go wherever he pleased. As if I should ever let him go alone when we have been round the world together. Who would there be to assist him when he was fatigued if I were not there? Whose strong hand to help him over a precipice? Who would nurse him if he were to fall ill? No, Mr. Richard, Joe will aways be at his post beside the doctor, or rather, I should say, all round him."

"You are a brave fellow."

"Besides, you will come with us," said Joe.

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"Oh, of course," said Kennedy, "that is to say, I shall accompany you with the view to stop you at the last moment from putting such folly into execution. I will follow the doctor as far as Zanzibar in the hope that he may even then be dissuaded from his mad project."

"With all due respect to you, Mr. Kennedy, you will not have the slightest effect. My master is not one of your hair-brained sort. He has been pondering over this undertaking for a long time, and once his resolution is taken, the devil himself cannot compel him to change his mind."

"That remains to be proved," said Kennedy.

"Don't you flatter yourself with any such idea," continued Joe. "Besides, it is very important that you should come too. A sportsman like yourself will be in his very element in Africa. So you see for every reason you will not regret your journey."

"No, certainly. I shall not regret it if this idiotic scheme can ever be carried out."

"By-the-bye," said Joe, "do you know that this is the day to be weighed?"

"What do you mean by weighed?"

"Well, weighed—you and I and my master."

"What, like jockeys?"

"Yes, like jockeys. Only be assured you will not be obliged to train if you are too stout. They will take you as you are."

"I shall certainly not allow myself to be weighed," said the Scot with some warmth.

"But, sir, it is necessary for the balloon that you should."

"Well, the balloon must do without, that's all."

"Oh, very well, and if in consequence of wrong estimates the balloon should not be able to take us——"

"Oh, I don't mean that, of course."

"Well, shall we, Mr. Kennedy? My master will be coming to look for us in a moment."

"I shall not go," said Kennedy.

"I am sure you would not wish to annoy him."

"I cannot help that."

"Capital," cried Joe, laughing; "you only say that because he is not here, but when he comes in and says to you, 'Dick,' (begging your pardon, sir) 'Dick, I want to know exactly what you weigh,' you will go, take my word for it."

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"I tell you I shall *not*."

At this moment the doctor entered the study where this conversation had been carried on. He looked towards Dick, who did not feel quite at his ease.

"Dick," said the doctor, "come with Joe, will you, I want to ascertain what you two weigh."

"But——" began Kennedy.

"You needn't take off your hat—come along."

And Kennedy went accordingly.

They presented themselves at the workshop of Messrs. Mitchell, where a steel-yard had been got ready. It was absolutely necessary that the doctor should know the weight of his companions, so as to be able to ascertain the floating power of his balloon. He requested Dick to get upon the platform of the scales; he did so without resisting, but he muttered, "Very well, but this commits me to nothing."

"One hundred and fifty-three pounds," said the doctor, writing the weight on his note-book.

"Am I too heavy?" said Kennedy.

"Oh dear no, Mr. Kennedy," said Joe; "besides, I am so light that it will equalize the matter."

As he said this, Joe took his place with alacrity on the machine. He was very nearly upsetting the whole thing in his excitement, and he posed himself after the attitude of the Duke of Wellington as Achilles in Hyde Park, and was very grand even without the buckler. "One hundred and twenty pounds," wrote the doctor.

"Ha, ha!" cried Joe, with a radiant satisfaction. Why he smiled he never could have explained.

"Now it is my turn," said Ferguson; and he entered 135 lbs. on his own account. "We three," he added, "do not weigh more than 400 lbs."

"But, sir," said Joe, "if it were necessary I could starve myself a little, and come down twenty pounds or so."

"There will be no necessity for that, my lad," replied the doctor; "you may eat as much as you like, and here is half-a-crown, so that you may indulge your tastes a little."

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CHAPTER VII

THE MYSTERIOUS APPARATUS

Doctor Ferguson had been occupied for a long time in the details of his expedition. One can quite understand that the balloon, the wonderful vehicle destined to transport him through the air, was the object of his solicitude.

To begin with, and so as not to have the balloon too large, he resolved to inflate it with hydrogen gas, which is 14½ times lighter than the atmospheric air. This gas is easily made, and by its use has been the means of obtaining the best aërostatic observations.

The doctor, after careful calculation, found that, with the indispensable articles of the journey, clothes, &c., it would be necessary to carry a weight of 4,000 lbs. He must therefore provide an ascensional power capable of lifting this weight, and also ascertain what its capacity would be.

A weight of 4,000 lbs. is represented by a displacement of 44,877 cubic feet of air; in other words, that amount of air weighs about 4,000 lbs.

By giving to his balloon the capacity of 44,877 cubic feet of air, and filling it, in lieu of air, with hydrogen gas (which, being 14½ times lighter than air, would not weigh more than 275 lbs.), there would remain a difference in the equilibrium to the amount of 3,724 lbs. This is the difference between the weight of the gas in the balloon and the weight of the exterior air, which difference constitutes the ascensional power of the balloon.

Now, if we were to introduce the said 44,877 cubic feet of gas into the balloon it would be completely filled, and that would never do, because the higher the balloon rises into the atmosphere, the less dense is the air, and the gas would very quickly burst the covering. So a balloon is usually filled to the extent of two-thirds its capacity.

But the doctor, following out an idea of his own, resolved to fill the balloon only half full, and, inasmuch as he was obliged to carry 44,877 cubic feet of hydrogen, to make his balloon almost double the usual size.

He designed it of an elongated form, which appeared to be the best. The horizontal diameter was fifty feet, the vertical diameter seventy-five. He thus obtained a spheroid capable of containing (in round numbers) 90,000 cubic feet of gas.

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If Dr. Ferguson had been able to make use of two balloons, his chances of success would have been increased, and if one happened to burst in the air, he could, by casting out ballast, save himself by means of the other. But the maneuvering of two balloons would have been very difficult when it was necessary to preserve an equal ascending power in both.

After much reflection, Ferguson, by an ingenious contrivance, united the utility of two balloons without their inconvenience; he constructed two of unequal size and enclosed one within the other. The exterior balloon, in which he adhered to the dimensions given above, contained a smaller one of the same shape, only forty-five and sixty-eight feet respectively, of horizontal and vertical diameter. The capacity of this interior balloon then was only 67,000 cubic feet. It floated in the fluid surrounding it. A valve opened from one balloon to the other, and admitted of communication between them.

This arrangement had this advantage—viz., that if it were at any time necessary to let the gas escape, it could be let off from the larger balloon. Even if they were obliged to empty it altogether, the smaller one would remain intact; they could then detach the exterior covering—a useless drag on them—and the second balloon by itself would not offer the same resistance to the wind as a partially-filled balloon.

Furthermore, if by accident the outer balloon were injured, the other would be intact. Both balloons were made with striped taffetas from Lyons, coated with gutta-percha. This resinous-gummy substance is perfectly waterproof, and is unaffected by acids or gas. The taffetas were placed side by side double, stretching upwards to the top, where almost all the weight was.

This envelope could retain the gas for an unlimited period. It weighed half a pound to nine square feet. Now as the surface of the exterior balloon was about 11,600 square feet, its envelope weighed 650 lbs. The envelope of the second balloon had a surface of 9,200 cubic feet, and weighed only 510 lbs.; altogether they weighed 1,160 lbs.

The netting to hold the car was made of the strongest hempen cord; the valves became objects of the most minute care, as if they had been the rudder of a ship. The car was

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of circular form, and fifteen feet in diameter, of osier, strengthened by a light iron covering, and fastened to the lower part by elastic springs, with a view to break the force of concussion. Its weight, including the net, did not exceed 280 pounds.

The doctor caused to be made also four chests of sheet-iron about one-eighth of an inch thick. These were joined together by tubes furnished with taps. He added a coil about two inches wide, which terminated in two straight branches of unequal lengths, of which the greater was twenty-five feet high, and the shorter fifteen feet only. The chests were fitted into the car so as to occupy the least possible space. The large tap, not easily fitted, was packed separately, as well as a large galvanic battery. This apparatus had been so ingeniously contrived that it only weighed 700 pounds, and contained as much as twenty-five gallons of water in one case alone.

The instruments prepared for the journey were two barometers, two thermometers, two compasses, a sextant, two chronometers, an artificial horizon, and an instrument to take the levels of distant and inaccessible objects. He had access to the Greenwich Observatory. He, however, did not propose to make any experiments in physics, he wished merely to become acquainted with his intended route, and to determine the position of the principal rivers, mountains, and towns.

He provided three grapnels of well-tested iron, also a silken ladder, tough and tight, about fifty feet in length.

He also estimated the weight of his provisions; they consisted of tea, coffee, biscuits, salt meat, and pemmican, a preparation which, in a very small compass, contains a great deal of nourishment. Besides a reserve of brandy, he stowed away two tanks of water.

The consumption of these viands would, by degrees, diminish the weight of the balloon. For it is very necessary to know that in the air a balloon is sensible of the least difference of weight. An almost inappreciable loss is sufficient to make a considerable difference in displacement.

The doctor had not forgotten a tent, which could cover up part of the car; neither rugs, which composed all their bed-clothes during the journey; nor the rifles and ammunition.

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The following is the statement of his different calculations:

Ferguson	135	lbs.
Kennedy	153	"
Joe	120	"
Weight of first balloon	650	"
Weight of second balloon	510	"
Car and netting	280	"
Grapnels, instruments, guns, rugs, tent, and various utensils	190	"
Meat, pemmican, biscuits, tea, coffee, and brandy	386	"
Water	400	"
Apparatus	700	"
Weight of hydrogen	276	"
Ballast	200	"
Total	4,000	lbs.

Such was the detail of the 4,000 pounds that Doctor Ferguson proposed to raise. He only carried 200 pounds of ballast, "merely for a contingency," said he, for, thanks to his arrangements, he did not anticipate to be obliged to use it.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAREWELL DINNER

About the 10th of February the preparations were near completion; the balloons, enclosed one within the other, were entirely finished; they had been subjected to a tremendous pressure, and this "proving" raised high opinions as to their powers of endurance, and bore witness to the care brought to bear upon their construction.

Joe was beside himself with joy; he was perpetually moving between Greek Street and the workshop of the Messrs. Mitchell—always busy, but always in good spirits; volunteering information on all sides, delighted above all things to accompany his master. I am of opinion that, to show the balloon, to explain the doctor's ideas, even to let him be seen at a window or during his walk through the streets, gained this worthy lad many a half-crown. He did not intend this altogether, but he certainly had the right to profit a little by the admiration and curiosity of his contemporaries.

On the 16th February the *Resolute* cast anchor at Greenwich. She was a screw steamer of 800 tons, a fast sailer, and had been commissioned to revictual the expedition to

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the Arctic Regions under Sir James Ross. Captain Penney was a good-natured man, and was particularly interested in the doctor's journey, which he saw the value of some time before. Penney was more of a *savant* than a sailor, but that did not militate against his carrying four carronades on board, which, however, had never done any harm, and only made the least warlike of reports.

The hold of the *Resolute* was fitted up for the reception of the balloon. It was put on board most carefully on the 18th February, and stowed away at the bottom of the vessel so as to avoid the chance of accident. The car and its accessories, the grapnels, the ropes, the provisions, the water-tanks (which were to be filled on arrival), were all stowed under the eyes of Ferguson himself. They also put on board ten tons of sulphuric acid, and ten tons of old iron, for the manufacture of hydrogen gas. This was a more than sufficient quantity, but it was necessary to guard against possible loss. The apparatus for developing the gas, including about thirty barrels, was placed in the hold.

These various preparations were completed by the evening of the 18th February. Two well-arranged cabins had been prepared for the doctor and Kennedy. The latter, all the time vowing that he would not go, came on board with a perfect armory of guns and rifles, two excellent double-barreled breech-loaders, and a carbine, tested by Purday, Moore, and Dickson, of Edinburgh. With such a weapon the sportsman would have no difficulty to lodge a bullet in the eye of a chamois at 2,000 yards. Added to these he had two Colt's " six-shooters " with the latest improvements; his powder-flask, shot-pouch, lead, and bullets in sufficient quantity did not exceed the weight laid down by the doctor.

The three travelers went on board on the 19th February and were received with great distinction by the captain and officers. The doctor was quite self-possessed but unusually preoccupied with his expedition. Dick was much moved, but tried not to betray his feelings. Joe jumped about, making absurd remarks, and was at once installed as the wag of the forecastle, where a berth had been reserved for him. On the 20th, a grand farewell dinner was given in honor of Doctor Ferguson and his friend Kennedy, by the Royal Geographical Society. Captain Penney and his officers had also been invited, who were very cheerful, and had their

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healths proposed in flattering terms. Healths were drank in sufficient number to ensure for each guest an existence of centuries. Sir Francis M—— presided, with repressed emotion, but in a very dignified manner.

To the unutterable confusion of Dick Kennedy, he came in for a large share of the festive compliments. After having drunk to "the bold Ferguson, the glory of England," they found it necessary to toast "the no less courageous Kennedy, his brave companion."

Dick blushed deeply, which was put down to modesty; the applause was redoubled. Dick blushed still more.

A telegram from the Queen was received at dessert. She presented her compliments to the travelers, and her good wishes for the success of their enterprise.

This incident necessitated a new toast to the "Health of Her Most Gracious Majesty."

At midnight, after the most touching farewells and warm grasps of the hand, the guests separated.

The boats of the *Resolute* were in waiting at Westminster Bridge, the captain took his place in company with his officers and passengers, and a rapid ebb tide quickly carried them to Greenwich. At one o'clock they were all fast asleep on board.

The next morning, the 21st, at three o'clock, the fires were lighted; at five, the anchor was weighed, and with the assistance of her screw, the *Resolute* threaded her way to the sea.

There is no necessity for us to repeat the conversation which, on board, turned solely upon Dr. Ferguson's expedition. By his bearing, equally as by words, he inspired such confidence that, save the Scot, no one questioned the success of his undertaking. During the long, idle hours on board, the doctor instituted a regular geographical lecture in the ward-room. The young men were passionately interested in the discoveries which had been made during forty years in Africa. He related the explorations of Barth, Burton, Speke, and Grant; he described to them that mysterious land given up on all sides to scientific research. In the north the young Duveyrier had explored the Sahara, and brought back the Touareg chiefs to Paris. Two expeditions, under the authority of the French Government, were being prepared, which, descending from the north to the west, would

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meet at Timbuctoo. In the south the indefatigable Livingstone was continually advancing towards the equator, and, since March, 1862, he had advanced with Mackenzie up the river Rovoonia. The century would certainly not pass away without Africa being compelled to reveal the secrets hidden in her breast for 6,000 years.

The interest of Dr. Ferguson's audience was more excited than ever when he made them acquainted with the details of his preparations. They wanted to verify his calculations, they argued, and the doctor entered frankly into the discussion.

Generally they were surprised by the relatively limited quantity of food carried. One day they questioned him on this point.

"Does that astonish you?" asked the doctor.

"Certainly it does."

"But for what length of time do you suppose I shall continue my journey? Whole months? That is a mistake on your part. If it be extended we shall be lost, and shall never get back at all. Are you not aware that it is only 3,500 miles, say 4,000 miles, from Zanzibar to Senegal coast? Now, at the rate of 240 miles in twelve hours, not nearly the speed of our railways, by day and night, seven days would be ample to cross the African continent."

"But then you will not be able to see anything, nor to make geographical observations, nor to take notes of the country."

"Well," replied the doctor, "if I be master of my balloon, if I can ascend or descend when I please, I shall be able to halt when I choose, and whenever the winds are so violent as to threaten my safety."

"And you will encounter them," said Captain Penney. "There are hurricanes there which rush at the rate of 240 miles an hour."

"So, you see," replied the doctor, "that at that pace you could cross Africa in twelve hours. You might start from Zanzibar and sleep at St. Louis."

"But," asked an officer, "is it possible that a balloon can be impelled at such a pace?"

"That has been proved," replied Ferguson.

"And the balloon resisted the pressure?"

"Perfectly. It occurred during the year 1804. Garnerin,

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the aëronaut, started from Paris at eleven o'clock at night a balloon, on which was inscribed in golden letters, 'Paris, 25th month, 13th year, coronation of the Emperor Napoleon by Pope Pius the Seventh.' The following morning, at five o'clock, the inhabitants of Rome perceived the identical balloon hovering above the Vatican; it crossed the Campagna, and fell into the Lake of Bracciano. So you see, gentlemen, that a balloon can exist in such a rapid transit."

"A balloon, yes; but how about a man?" Kennedy asked.

"Just as well. For a balloon is always motionless, in consequence of the air surrounding it. It is not the man who moves, it is the mass of the air itself; so that, if you were to light a candle in the car, the flame would not flicker. An aëronaut in Garnerin's balloon would not have suffered by the rate of progression. However, I do not propose to try such a rapid flight, and if I can anchor during the night to some tree or to some uneven ground, I shall be all right. We shall carry, moreover, provisions for two months, and nothing will prevent our skillful sportsman here from shooting any quantity of game when we get to the ground."

"Ah, Mr. Kennedy, you will, indeed, have some splendid sport," said a young midshipman, with an envious glance at the Scotchman.

"Without counting the double pleasure of partaking in the glory of the expedition," said another.

"Gentlemen," replied Kennedy, "I am very sensible of your kind compliments, but I cannot accept them, I fear."

"Hallo, what's this!" was heard on all sides. "Do you not intend to go?"

"I shall not go."

"You will not accompany Doctor Ferguson?"

"Not only shall I not go with him, but I am here for the express purpose of stopping him even at the last moment!"

Everyone looked at the doctor.

"Don't listen to him," said Ferguson calmly. "It is a subject we never need discuss with him. He knows perfectly well at heart that he will go!"

"By St. Andrew," cried Kennedy, "I swear——"

"Don't swear, Dick, my friend; you have been measured and weighed, you and your powder and shot, your guns and your rifles, so there is no use talking about it."

And it is a fact that, from that day until the day they

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reached Zanzibar, Dick did not open his mouth upon that subject or any other. Dick was dumb!

CHAPTER IX
DOUBLING THE CAPE

THE *Resolute* made rapid progress towards the Cape, meeting with fine weather, but with occasionally heavy seas. Upon the 30th March, twenty-seven days after they had left London, Table Mountain appeared upon the horizon. Cape Town, situated at the foot of an amphitheater of hills, could be distinguished by the glasses, and the *Resolute* soon cast anchor in the harbor. But the captain only waited to "coal," which was accomplished in a day, and upon the following one the ship's head was put to the south to double the most southerly point of Africa and enter the Mozambique Channel.

As this was by no means Joe's first voyage, he very soon made himself at home on board. Everyone liked him for his frankness and good humor. No inconsiderable portion of his master's fame was reflected upon him, he was listened to as an oracle, and he had not the slightest doubt that he was anything else.

Now, while the doctor was continuing his course of lectures in the cabin, Joe was mounted on the forecastle telling stories in his own way, a proceeding in imitation of the greatest writers of all ages. The subject of the aërial voyage was naturally discussed. Joe had had some trouble to overcome the stubborn spirits of his companions; but now the enterprise was an accepted fact, the imagination of the sailors, stimulated by Joe's stories, believed everything to be possible.

This dazzling narrator had persuaded his hearers that after this voyage there would be many more undertaken. It was only the commencement of a long series of superhuman expeditions. "Don't you see, my friends, that when one has had a taste of this kind of locomotion one can be no longer contented, so in our next expedition, instead of going sideways, we shall go directly upwards."

"What! right up into the moon, then?" cried his astonished audience.

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"Into the moon?" rejoined Joe; "no, faith, that is too commonplace. Everybody now goes up to the moon. Moreover, there is no water there, and one would be obliged to carry a quantity of provisions, and even air in bottles to be able to breathe."

"Well, it would be all right if one could find some grog up there," said a sailor who had only lately experienced the taste of that mixture.

"That's enough, my lad, we shall not go to the moon, but we shall sail about amongst the stars in the midst of those beautiful planets of which my master has often spoken to me. We shall commence by visiting Saturn."

"That one with the ring?" asked the quartermaster.

"Yes, a wedding-ring, only no one knows what has become of his wife."

"Hullo! are you going so far as that?" said a cabin-boy, utterly astounded. "Why your master must be the devil in person!"

"The devil! oh dear no; he is too good for that."

"But where are you going after Saturn?" asked one of the most impatient of the audience.

"After Saturn? Well, we shall visit Jupiter, a most extraordinary country, where the days are only nine hours and a half long, which is a great blessing for idle people; and where the years, by-the-by, last as long as twelve of ours, which is a great source of satisfaction to people who have only six months to live. That gives them a little longer lease of life."

"Twelve years!" exclaimed the cabin boy.

"Yes, my boy; so in that country you would not be weaned yet, and that old fellow over there, who is nearly fifty, would be only a child four years and a half old."

"That is not true!" cried all the men.

"Perfectly true!" said Joe, with assurance. "But what can you expect if you will persist in vegetating in this world? You learn nothing, and you remain as ignorant as a porpoise. Come up to Jupiter for a little, and you will see. You must hold on pretty tight up there, for there are satellites knocking about which are occasionally inconvenient."

They laughed at this, but they did not half believe him. Then he spoke to them about Neptune, where sailors were always so well received, and of Mars, where soldiers take

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the wall, which conduct on their part invariably leads to a fight As for Mercury, it is a wretched place, full of robbers and tradesmen, who are so much alike, that it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. Finally, he drew them a truly enchanting picture of Venus; "and when we shall have returned from that expedition we shall be decorated with the Southern Cross."

"And well you will have won it," cried the sailors.

Thus, in animated conversation, the long evenings were passed on the forecastle. All this time the interesting conversations with the doctor continued.

One day, when they were conversing respecting the guidance of balloons, Ferguson was asked to give his opinion on the question.

"I do not think," he said, "that we shall ever be able to direct the course of a balloon. I am acquainted with all the systems which have been proposed or attempted. Not one has succeeded; not one is practicable. You may very well imagine that I have myself been engaged in this matter, which ought to possess a very great interest for me, but I have never been able to solve it by means of our present knowledge of mechanics. It would be necessary to discover a motive power of extraordinary strength and of an impossible lightness. Even then, one could not resist any considerable currents. As it is, one is much more anxious to direct the car than the balloon. That's a mistake."

"Nevertheless," said someone, "there is a great resemblance between the balloon and a ship, which can be guided at will."

"Not at all," replied Doctor Ferguson; "there is little or no resemblance. Air is infinitely less dense than water, in which, moreover, a ship is only half submerged, while the balloon is entirely surrounded by the atmosphere, and remains stationary on account of the fluid which encircles it."

"Then you are of opinion that science is exhausted upon that point?"

"Not so, not so; it has become necessary to look for other means by which, if a balloon cannot be guided, it can be kept up in favorable atmospheric currents. As one rises higher, these currents become more uniform, and are more constant in their direction, as they are not interfered with by the valleys and mountains which intersect the face of the earth;

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and here is the principal cause, as you are aware, of the changes of the force and direction of the wind. Now once these zones have been determined, the balloon will only have to be placed in the currents which will be met there."

"But," replied the captain, "to hit upon these currents you must be always ascending or descending. There is the true difficulty, my dear doctor."

"Why, my dear captain?"

"Let us understand each other; it would only be an obstacle in the way of long journeys, not for small ascents."

"Your reasons, if you please?"

"Because you can only ascend by throwing out ballast, you can only descend by letting the gas escape; and under these circumstances your store of gas would be very soon exhausted."

"My dear Penney, that is the point of the whole thing. There is *the* difficulty which science should endeavor to overcome. It is not a question of directing the course of a balloon so much, as it is a question of moving up and down without losing the gas, which is the strength, the blood, the soul, so to speak, of a balloon."

"Quite right, doctor; but this difficulty is not overcome; the means to accomplish this have not yet been found."

"Excuse me, they have been."

"By whom?"

"By me."

"By *you!*"

"Why, you must understand that without this power I should not have run the risks of crossing Africa in a balloon. Why, in about twenty-four hours I should have had no gas left."

"But you have never spoken of this in England!"

"No, I did not think it desirable to discuss it in public. That seemed to me useless. I made secretly some preliminary experiments, and I am satisfied. I have not any need of learning anything further on that point."

"My dear Ferguson, may one ask to be made acquainted with your secrets?"

"Here it is, gentlemen, and my plan is a very simple one."

The curiosity of the audience was raised to the highest pitch, while the doctor calmly addressed himself to his subject as follows.

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CHAPTER X

PRELIMINARY EXPERIMENTS

"ATTEMPTS have been made frequently, gentlemen, to ascend and descend at will, without losing the gas in a balloon. A French aëronaut, M. Meumier, attempted to do this by compressing the air. A Belgian, Dr. Van Hecke, by means of wings and paddles, gained a vertical force, which has proved ineffective in the majority of instances. The practical results obtained by the above means are insignificant.

"I then resolved to go into the question boldly, and at once put the ballast on one side, if it were not a case of absolute necessity as to the breaking of my apparatus, or in case of being obliged to rise suddenly to avoid any obstacle.

"My means of ascent and descent consist equally in the dilation or contraction by varying temperatures of the gas confined in the balloon. And this is how I manage it.

"You have already seen put on board certain chests with the car, of which you did not understand the utility. These chests are five in number.

"The first contains about twenty-five gallons of water, to which I add sulphuric acid to increase its conductibility, and I resolve it into its component parts by means of a strong Bautzen galvanic battery. Water, as you are aware, is composed of two volumes hydrogen gas to one of oxygen.

"The oxygen under the battery action goes off by the positive pole into a second chest. A third chest, placed on the top of it, and of about twice the size, receives the hydrogen which enters it by the negative pole.

"Two taps, one of which has an opening double that of the other, keep up a communication between these two cases and a fourth, which is known as the mixing chest. Here in fact the gases arising from the decomposition of the water mingle together. The capacity of this chest is about forty-one cubic feet. In the upper part of it is a platinum tube with a stop-cock.

"You will already have perceived, gentlemen, that the apparatus I have described is nothing more than an oxy-hydrogen blow-pipe, the heat evolved by which surpasses that of a forge fire.

"That matter settled, I pass on to the second part of the apparatus.

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"From the lower part of my balloon, which is hermetically closed, two tubes pass out at a short distance from each other. One of these leads from the upper volume of hydrogen, the other from the lower. They both descend as far as the car, and terminate in a cylindrical iron chest called the heat chest. It is closed at each extremity by a strong disc of the same metal.

"The tube from the lower part of the balloon enters the cylindrical chest through the lower disc, and there assumes the shape of a coil, whose upper rings occupy nearly the entire height of the box. Before leaving the chest, the coil is led into a little cone, whose base, concave, like a round cap, is directed downwards.

"It is at the top of this cone that the second tube makes its exit, and it terminates, as I have said, in the upper folds of the balloon.

"The spherical cap of the little cone is made of platinum, so that it may not be melted under the action of the blow-pipe, for this is placed at the bottom of the iron case in the center of the coil, and the flame lightly licks this cap.

"You know those stoves used for warming rooms? You know how they act? The air of the room is forced through the tubes and comes back warmer. So that what I have been describing is, after all, only a stove.

"And, in fact, what takes place? Once the blow-pipe is lighted, the hydrogen is warmed and rises rapidly by the tube to the upper part of the balloon. A vacuum is caused below, and the gas from the lower part is attracted to fill it, which, in its turn, is warmed, and is continually replaced, so that an extremely rapid current of gas is generated, leaving the balloon, returning, and being warmed without cessation.

"Now, gases increase 1/480 of their volume for every degree of heat. If, then, I create a temperature of 18°, the hydrogen in the balloon will increase 18/480, or 1,614 cubic feet; it will then displace 1,674 cubic feet of air more, which will increase its power of ascent 160 pounds. That comes, then, to the same weight of ballast. If I increase the temperature to 180°, the gas expands 180/480, it displaces 6,740 cubic feet, and the ascending force amounts to 1,600 pounds.

"You can understand, gentlemen, that I am easily able to obtain considerable changes of equilibrium. The volume of my balloon has been calculated in such a way that, when half

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inflated, it displaces a weight of air exactly equal to the envelope of hydrogen gas and of the car occupied by the travelers and their belongings. At this point of inflation it is in exact equilibrium in the air; it will neither rise nor fall.

"In order to ascend, I bring the gas to a temperature higher than the ambient temperature, by means of my blow-pipe; by this access of heat, a strong tension is created, and fills the balloon, which rises so long as I expand the hydrogen.

"The descent is, naturally, made by moderating the heat, and permitting the temperature to cool. The ascent will generally be much more rapid than the descent. But that is a very good feature, for one never wants to descend quickly, and it is, on the contrary, a quick upward movement by which I avoid danger beneath me, not above the balloon.

"However, as already hinted, I have a certain quantity of ballast which can be got rid of, and enable me to rise still more quickly if desirable. The valve at the top is only a safety-valve. The balloon itself looks after its supply of hydrogen; the variations of temperature which I can produce in the center of the gas reservoir are only applied to the ascending and descending movements.

"Now, gentlemen, I will just add a few practical details.

"The combustion of hydrogen and oxygen at the end of the blow-pipe produces only watery vapor. I have therefore provided the lower part of the cylindrical case with an escape-pipe acting with the pressure of two atmospheres. Consequently, so soon as that pressure has been reached, the vapor makes its escape of its own accord.

"Here are the exact figures.

"Twenty-five gallons of water, resolved into their constituent elements, yield 200 pounds of oxygen and 25 pounds of hydrogen. That represents, at the tension of the air, 1,890 cubic feet of the former and 3,780 cubic feet of the latter; altogether 5670 cubic feet of the mingled gases.

"Now the top of the blow-pipe, fully open, gives twenty-seven cubic feet per hour, with a flame at least six times more powerful than the largest lamp. On an average, then, and so as not to be too high up, I shall only burn nine cubic feet in the hour, so my twenty-five gallons of water represents 630 hours of aërial navigation, or rather more than twenty-six days.

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"As I can descend at pleasure and obtain water on my route, my journey is practically indefinite.

"There is my secret, gentlemen; it is very simple, and, like all simple things, it cannot but succeed. My plan is only the extension and contraction of the gas in the balloon, which necessitates no wings nor mechanical power of motion. A stove to produce changes of temperature and a blow-pipe to warm it are neither heavy nor in the way. I believe that I have overcome all the serious difficulties of the undertaking."

Here Doctor Ferguson ended his discourse, and was heartily applauded. No one had any objections to advance. Everything appeared provided for and carried out.

"Nevertheless," said the captain, "it may be very dangerous."

"What does that matter," rejoined the doctor, "if it be practicable?"

CHAPTER XI

ARRIVAL AT ZANZIBAR

FAVORING breezes had hurried the *Resolute* towards her destination. The Mozambique Channel proved particularly kind to her. The sea voyage was held as a good omen for the success of the air journey. Everyone on board wished for the moment of arrival, and vied in assisting Doctor Ferguson in his final preparations.

At length the vessel came in sight of the town of Zanzibar, situated upon the island of the same name, and on the 15th April, at 11 A. M., she cast anchor in the harbor.

Zanzibar belongs to the Imaum of Muscat, an ally of England and France, and it is certainly a beautiful possession. The harbor shelters a great number of ships hailing from neighboring ports. The island is only separated from the mainland by a channel about thirty miles wide.

Zanzibar enjoys a large traffic in gum, ivory, and, above all, ebony, for it is a celebrated slave market. Here are concentrated all the booty taken in the battles which are being incessantly waged by the chiefs in the interior. This traffic extends to the whole eastern coast, almost up to the Nile region, and M. Lejean has seen them carrying on the traffic close to the French consul's residence.

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So soon as the *Resolute* had arrived the English consul came on board, to offer his assistance to the doctor whose intentions the European journals had some time before announced. But up to that time the consul had enrolled himself among the skeptics.

"I confess I did doubt you," said he, extending his hand to Doctor Ferguson, "but I doubt no longer."

He placed his house at the disposal of the doctor, of Kennedy, and, naturally, of Joe also. While enjoying these attentions the doctor saw several letters which the consul had received from Captain Speke. The captain and his companions had undergone terrible sufferings from hunger and bad weather before reaching the territory of Ugogo. They only advanced with extreme difficulty, and gave up all hope of forwarding intelligence quickly.

"Those are some of the perils and privations which we shall avoid," said the doctor.

The baggage of the three travelers was sent up to the consul's house. They made preparations to land the balloon upon the beach at Zanzibar; they had there fixed upon a convenient spot close to the signal station, near to an enormous building which sheltered them from the east wind. This immense tower, like a tun standing on end, and compared to which the great tun of Heidelberg is but a small barrel, was used as a fort, and upon the platforms Beloutchis, armed with lances, kept watch—a lazy, noisy garrison.

But when the balloon was about to be landed, the consul was warned that the population of the island would oppose the disembarkation by force. This was only their blind fanatical passions showing themselves. The news of the arrival of a Christian, who was about to rise up into the air, was received with much irritation. The blacks, more excited than the Arabs, saw in this project intentions hostile to their religion, for they imagined the white men were about to go up to the sun and moon. As the sun and moon are both worshiped by the African tribes, these people determined to oppose this sacrilegious expedition. The consul being acquainted with these intentions of the negroes, conferred respecting them with the doctor and Captain Penney. The latter had no desire to yield to menace, but his friend caused him to regard it in a different light.

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"We shall accomplish our object," said he, "and even the Imaum's soldiers would assist us if necessary; but my dear captain, an accident very easily occurs—an unfortunate blow would do irreparable damage to the balloon, and the journey would be hopelessly deferred; it is much better to take precautionary measures."

"But what can you do? If we disembark anywhere on the coast, it will be all the same. What can you do?"

"Nothing easier to answer," said the consul. "Do you perceive those islands outside the harbor? Disembark your balloon there, establish a *cordon* of sailors round you, and you will have nothing to fear."

"Capital," cried the doctor, "and we shall be able to make our preparations in comfort."

The captain yielded to this advice. The *Resolute* hauled up alongside the island of Koumbeni. During the morning of the 16th April the balloon was safely bestowed in the midst of an open space, shaded from the sun by large surrounding trees.

Two masts, each twenty-eight feet high, were placed at some distance apart, and pulleys fixed to them, so as to raise the balloon to the center of the rope stretched between them. The balloons were quite empty. The inner one was fastened to the top of the outer one, so that it could be raised with it.

To the lower extremity of each balloon were fixed the tubes for the introduction of the hydrogen. The whole of the 17th was passed in arranging the apparatus for making the gas. It consisted of thirty casks, in which the decomposition of the water was carried on by means of iron and sulphuric acid mixed with a quantity of water. The hydrogen gave off into a vast vat in the center, having been purified in transit, and thence it passed into the balloons through the tubes. In this manner each was filled with an accurately-known quantity of gas. In this operation 1,866 gallons of sulphuric acid, 16,500 pounds of iron, and 966 gallons of water were employed.

This operation was begun about three o'clock on the following morning, and continued till eight. The next day the balloons, covered by the net, were balanced gracefully above the car, which was held down by a number of bags of earth. The apparatus for the dilation was put in with

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great care, and the pipes leading from the balloon were fastened into the cylindrical chest.

The grapnels, ropes, instruments, rugs, tent, the provisions, and arms were placed in the car as previously arranged. Water was provided at Zanzibar. Two hundred pounds of ballast were taken in in fifty sacks, and placed at the bottom of the car within reach. The preparations were ended about 5 P. M. The sentinels patroled continually around the island, and the boats of the *Resolute* kept watch in the channel.

The negroes continued to display their anger by cries, grimaces, and contortions. The sorcerers went about amongst the excited people fanning their indignation. Some fanatics endeavored to swim across to the island, but they were easily repulsed.

Then the charms and incantations commenced. The rain-compellers, who pretended to be able to control the clouds, summoned up hurricanes and hailstones to their assistance. For that object they collected leaves of all the different trees in the country and made a fire, and sacrificed a sheep by driving a long needle into its heart. But, notwithstanding their ceremonies, the sky continued cloudless, and they were no better for their sheep and their grimaces.

The negroes then abandoned themselves to the most terrible orgies, and got tremendously drunk with "tembo," a potent spirit derived from the cocoa-nut tree, or upon a very "heady" species of beer called "togwa." Their songs without melody, but of correct rhythm, were heard all through the night.

About 6 P. M. a farewell dinner was given to the three travelers on board the *Resolute*. Kennedy, to whom nobody addressed many questions, muttered some indistinct sentences, and never took his gaze from Doctor Ferguson. This was a very melancholy repast. The near approach of the moment for parting inspired many sad reflections in everyone. What fate was in store for these venturesome travelers? Would they ever return to their friends and their happy homes? If their means of transport failed, what would become of them in the midst of savage tribes in an unknown territory in the embrace of an illimitable desert.

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These fancies, hitherto put in the background, and to which they had attached little importance, now began to prey upon their already excited feelings. Doctor Ferguson, always cool and collected, spoke of other things and other people, but even he struggled in vain to dissipate the prevailing sadness; he could not overcome that.

As some fears had been expressed respecting the safety of the doctor and his companions, they slept that night on board the *Resolute*. At 6 A. M. they quitted their cabin and landed on the island of Koumbeni. The balloon floated gracefully in the light easterly breeze. The bags of earth had been replaced by twenty sailors. Captain Penney and his officers were present at this last solemn farewell.

At this moment Kennedy walked up to the doctor, and took his hand. "Is it really decided, Samuel, that you are going?"

"It is really decided, my dear Dick."

"I have done all I could to hinder your voyage?"

"Everything!"

"Then my conscience is clear, and I shall go with you!"

"I was sure you would," replied the doctor, as the tears started to his eyes.

The moment for the final adieu had now arrived. The captain and his officers all embraced their courageous friends, not excepting the worthy Joe, proud and joyful that day. All the sailors wished to shake hands with Doctor Ferguson.

At nine o'clock the three traveling companions took their places in the car. The doctor lighted his blow-pipe, and heated it so as to produce a high temperature. The balloon, which had hitherto remained *in equilibrio,* began to sway. The sailors were obliged to slacken the ropes they held. The car ascended twenty feet.

"My friends," cried the doctor, coming forward and waving his hat, "let us give our aërial vessel a name which carries happiness everywhere—let us call it the 'Victoria!'"

A ringing cheer was the reply. "God save the Queen! Hurrah for Old England!"

At this moment the ascending force reached a tremendous pitch. Ferguson, Kennedy, and Joe waved a last adieu to their friends.

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"Let go, all!" cried the doctor. And the "Victoria" rose rapidly, while the four carronades of the *Resolute* thundered out a salute as she glided upwards on her perilous journey.

CHAPTER XII
CROSSING THE STRAITS

THE air was clear, the wind was moderate, the "Victoria" mounted almost perpendicularly to a height of 1,500 feet, which was indicated by a depression of nearly two inches in the barometrical column.

At this elevation, a more decided current carried the balloon towards the southwest. What a magnificent panorama unfolded itself beneath the eyes of the travelers! The island of Zanzibar was in sight from end to end, and stood out in its rich coloring as upon a huge board; the fields presented an appearance of patchwork, and the large clumps of trees indicated the woods and coppices.

The inhabitants appeared like insects. The cheers and cries died away in the air by degrees, and the reports of the ship's guns vibrated only in the lower concavity of the balloon. "How splendid all that is!" cried Joe, breaking the silence for the first time.

No reply was vouchsafed. The doctor was occupied in observing the barometrical changes and taking note of the various details of the ascent. Kennedy stared at it and could not take it all in.

The sun added to the heat of the blow-pipe and increased the expansion of the gas. The "Victoria" reached a height of 2,500 feet. The *Resolute* now appeared like a small barque, and the African coast loomed in the west like an enormous line of foam.

"Why don't you speak?" said Joe.

"We are making observations," replied the doctor, as he turned his glass towards the continent.

"Well, I feel as if I must speak," said Joe.

"Fire away, Joe; talk as much as you like."

Joe therefore gave way to a tremendous string of exclamations. The "ohs," the "ahs," and the "good heavens" were something astonishing.

While they were crossing the sea, the doctor thought it

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better to maintain this elevation, as he could observe a greater extent of coast; the thermometer and the barometer, suspended in the interior of the half-opened tent, were almost incessantly consulted; a second barometer, placed outside, was for use during the night.

After two hours the "Victoria," impelled at a rate of a little over eight miles, neared the coast. The doctor determined to approach the earth; he moderated the flame of the blow-pipe, and soon the balloon descended to within 300 feet of the ground.

He perceived that he was just over Mrima, a name bestowed on this portion of the coast of Eastern Africa; thick lines of mango bushes lined the shore, their roots, lacerated by the Indian Ocean, were left plainly visible by the ebb-tide. The sand-hills, which formerly constituted the coast line, rose above the horizon, and Mount Nguru showed its head in the northwest.

The "Victoria" passed close to a village, which, from the map, the doctor pronounced to be Kaole. All the population assembled to utter yells of anger and fear as the travelers passed. Arrows were vainly directed against the air monster, which floated majestically above the reach of their futile fury.

The wind went round to the south, but the doctor was not disturbed by this; on the contrary, he was rather glad to follow the route traversed by Captains Burton and Speke.

Kennedy at last had become as loquacious as Joe, and they mutually exchanged remarks expressive of their admiration. "What is a diligence after this?" said one.

"Or a steamer?" said the other.

"Or a wretched railway?" rejoined Kennedy, "in which you pass through the country without seeing it."

"Give me a balloon," said Joe, "where you needn't stir, and nature takes the trouble to unroll herself at your feet."

"What a magnificent prospect! how splendid it all is! like a beautiful dream in a hammock."

"I wonder if we are to have any breakfast," said Joe, to whom the pure air had given an appetite.

"Happy thought, my lad," said Kennedy.

"Oh! the cooking won't take long; it is only biscuits and preserved meat."

"With as much coffee as you like," added the doctor.

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"Allow me to borrow a little heat from my blow-pipe; there is plenty of it. In this way we shall have no fear of fire."

"That would be terrible," said Kennedy. "It is like sitting under a magazine."

"Not at all," said Ferguson; "if the gas did happen to take light it would burn by degrees, but we should come down to the ground, which would be inconvenient. But never fear, our balloon is hermetically sealed."

"Well, let us have something to eat," said Kennedy.

"Here you are, gentlemen," said Joe; "and while I follow your example in eating I will go and prepare a coffee of which you shall tell me the origin."

"The fact is," said the doctor, "that Joe, amongst a thousand virtues, has an extraordinary talent for preparing this delicious beverage. He makes it of all kinds of things which he never wishes me to know anything about."

"Well, sir, since we are in the open air, I can confide my recipe to you. It is, in fact, a mixture of equal parts of Mocha, Bourbon, and Rio Nunez."

Shortly afterwards three steaming cups were served, which brought a substantial breakfast to a termination, and each one resumed his post of observation.

The country was distinguished by its extreme fertility. Winding and narrow pathways were hidden by arches of verdure. They passed over fields of tobacco, maize and barley in full growth. Here and there immense rice-fields with their straight stalks and ruddy flowers. Sheep and goats were enclosed in raised pens, to preserve them from the attacks of leopards. A luxurious vegetation displayed itself upon this prodigal soil. In the numerous villages the cries and the astonishment were renewed at the sight of the "Victoria," and Doctor Ferguson kept prudently out of reach of arrows; the inhabitants, assembling around their thickly-grouped huts, pursued the travelers for long distances with vain yells and imprecations.

At noon, the doctor, referring to the map, was of opinion that they were above the town of Uzaramo. The country bristled with cocoa-nut, papaw, and cotton trees, over which the "Victoria" idly disported itself. Joe took all this as a matter of course, ever since he had made up his mind to come to Africa. Kennedy descried hares and quails, which desired no better fate than to be killed by his gun, but it

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would have been powder wasted, as it was impossible to recover the game.

The travelers moved at the rate of about twelve miles an hour, and soon found themselves in 38° 20′ longitude, over the village of Tounda. "That is the place," said the doctor, "where Burton and Speke succumbed to fever, and for a time believed their expedition must be given up. They were as yet but a little distance from the coast, but already fatigue and privation began to tell upon them."

In fact, in this region a perpetual malaria exists. Even the doctor could only escape its attacks by rising in the balloon above the miasma, which the burning sun caused to rise from the swampy earth.

Sometimes they could perceive a caravan reposing in a "kraal," waiting for the cool hours of evening to resume their journey. These "kraals" stand in large cleared spaces surrounded by hedges and jungle, where the traders are secure, not only from the attacks of wild beasts, but from those of the pillaging native tribes. The natives fled in every direction at the appearance of the "Victoria." Kennedy wished to have a nearer view, but the doctor would not hear of it.

"The chiefs are armed with muskets," he said, "and our balloon is too good a shot for them."

"Would a bullet-hole bring the balloon down?" asked Joe.

"Not immediately; but the aperture would soon extend to an immense fissure, through which all our gas would escape."

"Then I vote we keep at a respectful distance from those wretches. I wonder what they think of us up here. I am sure they want to worship us?"

"Let them worship us as much as they please at a distance. That pleases us all round. Look here, the country is already changing, villages are fewer, the mangoes have disappeared; their growth ceases in this latitude. The land is hilly, a sign we are approaching mountains. In fact," said Kennedy, "I fancy I can descry some mountains this side of us."

"In the west—those are the first chain of the Ourizara—Mount Duthumi, no doubt, behind which I hope we shall encamp for the night. I will stir up the blow-pipe a little,

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for we shall be obliged to rise here to about 500 or 600 feet."

"That is a first-rate idea of yours, sir," said Joe; "the movement is neither difficult nor fatiguing; just turn a tap, and it is all done."

"We shall be more comfortable," said Kennedy, "when the balloon is higher up; the reflection from that red sand is very trying."

"What splendid trees those are!" exclaimed Joe; "though quite natural, they are magnificent. Why, a dozen of them would make a forest!"

"They are the 'baobab,'" replied Doctor Ferguson. "See, one of their trunks must be almost 100 feet in circumference. It was, perhaps, at the trunk of that very tree that the unfortunate Frenchman, Maizan, was murdered in 1845, for we are just above the village of Deje la Mhora, whither he penetrated alone. He was captured by the chief of this territory, tied to the foot of the tree, and then the savage negro cut him slowly limb from limb, while he chanted a war-song. Then, making a deep incision in his victim's throat, he stopped to sharpen his knife, and literally tore the half-severed head from the body of the unfortunate Frenchman. He was only twenty-six."

"And did not France demand satisfaction for such a crime?" asked Kennedy.

"France did so, and the Saïd of Zanzibar did all he could to arrest the murderer, but without success."

"I hope I shall not be stopped in that way," said Joe. "Up higher, sir, if you have any regard for me."

"And the more willingly, Joe, that Mount Duthumi is peering at us. If my calculations be correct, we shall have passed it before 7 P.M.

"Shall we travel during the night?" asked the Scot.

"No; not unless we are obliged to do so. With precaution and careful watching we might do so in safety. But it is not enough to cross Africa, we must see it too."

"Hitherto we have not had much to complain of, sir. The country is the best cultivated and the most fertile in the world; not a desert, as the geographies would have us believe."

About half-past six the "Victoria" was opposite Mount Duthumi. It was necessary, to avoid it, to rise more than

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3,000 feet, and for that the doctor had only to raise the temperature eighteen degrees. It might be said that he worked the balloon with his hand. Kennedy warned him of the obstacles to avoid, and the "Victoria" rose through the air skimming past the mountain.

At eight o'clock they descended on the opposite side, but the descent was slower than the ascent. The grapnels were cast out, and one after the other came in contact with the branches of an enormous Indian fig, where they fastened themselves. Then Joe let himself slip down by the cord and secured the balloon as firmly as possible. The silk ladder was then thrown to him, and he reascended briskly. The balloon remained almost motionless, shaded from the wind.

The evening meal was prepared. The travelers, with appetites excited by their aërial trip, made a great hole in their provisions.

"What distance have we made to-day?" asked Kennedy, while masticating some troublesome morsels.

The doctor ascertained the day's work by means of lunar observations, and consulted the excellent map which served him as a guide—it was part of the atlas published in Gotha by his friend Petermann, which he had sent to him. This atlas would serve the doctor for the whole journey, for it contained the route of Burton and Speke to the great lakes, that to the Soudan undertaken by Barth, to the lower Senegal by William Lejean, and to the delta of the Niger by Dr. Baike.

Ferguson also possessed a book which contained all the speculations written respecting the Nile, and entitled, "The Sources of the Nile; being a general survey of the basin of that river, and of its head stream, with the history of the Nilotic discovery. By Charles Beke, D.D."

He also had the excellent maps published in the *Transactions of the Royal Geographical Society of London,* so any point of the country hitherto discovered could not now escape him.

Following the map, he found that the latitudinal route had been two degrees, or 120 miles, to the west. Kennedy remarked that the route turned towards the north; this direction satisfied the doctor, who wished as soon as possible to follow up the tracks of his predecessors.

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It was decided that the night should be divided into three watches, so that each could in his turn keep guard for the others. The doctor took the 9 P.M. watch, Kennedy the midnight turn, and Joe that at 3 A.M. So Kennedy and Joe, wrapped up in their rugs, laid down under the awning, and slept calmly while the doctor kept his vigil.

CHAPTER XIII

TRAVELING BY LAND

THE night was calm: nevertheless, upon the following morning (Saturday), Kennedy, on waking, complained of lassitude and shivering. The weather began to change, and the sky became covered with heavy clouds, as if preparing for a second deluge. Zungomero is a very "weeping" region indeed, for in that delightful locality it rains all the year round except perhaps for about fifteen days in January.

The heavy rain was not slow to assail the travelers. Below them the paths, intersected by "nullahs," the beds of mountain torrents, became impassable, choked as they were besides with bindweed and prickly plants. The travelers distinctly perceived the odor of sulphuretted hydrogen spoken of by Captain Burton.

"As he declared," said the doctor, "and he was right, one can almost believe that a dead body is hidden beneath each bush."

"A villainous country, certainly," said Joe, "and it seems to me that Mr. Kennedy is none the better for having passed the night in it."

"Well, to tell the truth, I have got a pretty strong touch of fever," said the Scot.

"My dear Dick, that is nothing wonderful; we are now in one of the most unhealthy spots in Africa. But we shall not be here long. Let us go."

Thanks to a rapid maneuver of Joe's, the grapnel was detached, and by means of the ladder he regained the car. The doctor at once expanded the gas and the "Victoria" resumed her voyage, impelled by a fairly strong breeze.

Some huts were scarcely visible in the pestilential mist beneath, but the country began soon to change its aspect.

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It is often the case in Africa that malarious regions of small extent border upon the most perfectly healthy districts.

Kennedy was suffering, and the fever prostrated him.

"This is scarcely the place to be laid up in," said he, as he wrapped himself in his rug and lay down.

"Just a little patience, Dick," replied the doctor, "and you will recover rapidly."

"Recover! By Jove, my dear Samuel, if you have any drug that will set me up, let me have it at once. I will swallow it with my eyes shut."

"I know something better than that, friend Dick. I will give you a dose that will cost nothing."

"How?"

"It is very simple. I am about to mount right over these clouds which are drowning us, and get free from this pestilential atmosphere. I only ask ten minutes to expand the gas."

The ten minutes had scarcely elapsed, when the balloon had passed out of the wet zone.

"Now, wait a little, Dick, and you will soon feel the benefit of the pure air and sunshine."

"There is indeed a remedy," cried Joe. "It is really wonderful!"

"Not at all—only natural."

"Oh! I don't doubt it is perfectly natural!"

"I only send Dick into purer air, as people are sent every day in Europe."

"Ah!" cried Kennedy, who already was beginning to feel better. "This balloon is really 'paradise.'"

"In any case it leads there," said Joe seriously.

The view beneath the balloon at that moment was a curious spectacle; the masses of cloud were piled up in magnificent array, moving one above the other, and tinged with the glorious rays of the sun. The "Victoria" had attained an altitude of 4,000 feet, and the thermometer indicated a fall in the temperature. The earth was invisible. About fifty miles westward, Mount Rubeho raised its sparkling head, which indicated the limit of the country of Ugogo, in 36° 20′ longitude. The wind had the force of twenty miles an hour, but the travelers felt nothing of this rapid movement; they experienced no inconvenience whatever, indeed they were scarcely aware of the progress they

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made. Three hours later, the prediction of Doctor Ferguson was verified. Kennedy's fever had departed, and he breakfasted with a good appetite.

"This is better than sulphate of quinine," said he, with evident satisfaction.

"Decidedly," cried Joe. "I shall come up here when I grow old."

About six o'clock in the morning the atmosphere cleared. They perceived an opening in the clouds; the earth reappeared, and the "Victoria" insensibly approached it. Doctor Ferguson was on the look-out for a current to carry the balloon towards the northeast, and at about 600 feet from the ground he fell in with it. The country became uneven, and even hilly. The district of Zongomero was lost in the east, and with it the last cocoa-nut trees of that latitude.

The mountains soon began to assume a more decided form. Some peaks shot up here and there. It was necessary to keep a watchful eye upon the sharp peaks, which appeared to rise up in an unexpected manner. "We are amongst the breakers," said Kennedy.

"All right, Dick. Don't be uneasy, we shall not touch them," said the doctor.

"This is a first-rate way to travel, all the same," said Joe.

The doctor managed his balloon with a wonderful dexterity, certainly.

"If we had been obliged to go on foot over that marshy ground," said the doctor, "we should have had to crawl slowly along in a regular slimy morass. Since our departure from Zanzibar, in that case, half our beasts of burthen would have been now dead with fatigue. We should have been looking like ghosts, and despair would have been gnawing at our hearts. We should have had incessant disputes with our guides and porters, and exposed to their attacks. During the day we should have suffered from a damp steamy air insupportable, and altogether enervating. At night there is frequently an almost intolerable coldness in the atmosphere, and the bites of a species of fly, which can pierce the stoutest cloth, would drive us mad. All these little enjoyments we should have had, without counting wild beasts and ferocious people."

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"I vote we don't try it," said Joe simply.

"I am not exaggerating in the least," said the doctor, "for at the recitals of travelers who have had the pluck to venture into these latitudes, the tears would actually come into your eyes."

About eleven o'clock they passed over the basin of the Imengé; the natives scattered about upon the hills vainly threatened the "Victoria" with their weapons, and the balloon soon arrived above the last spurs of the high ground which leads to the Rubeho, which forms the third chain, and highest mountain of the ranges of Usagara.

The travelers took careful notes of the orographical features of the country. The three ramifications, of which the Duthumi forms the first line, are separated by vast plains. The lofty ridges are rounded off at the summit, and the ground is strewn with large blocks of stone at intervals, amid the shingle. The steepest side of these mountains is towards Zanzibar, the western declivity being merely a gentle slope. The more level portions of the plain are covered with a black and fertile soil, where vegetation is luxuriant. Numerous watercourses run towards the east and flow into the Kingani in the neighborhood of gigantic clumps of sycamores, tamarinds, gourds, and palms.

"Listen," said Doctor Ferguson. "We are now approaching the Rubeho mountains, whose name being translated, means 'Passage of Winds.' We shall do well to cross the sharp peaks at a considerable altitude. If my map be correct, we must ascend to 5,000 feet."

"Shall we have to attain such an altitude frequently?" asked Kennedy.

"No; very seldom. The height of the African mountains appears to be relatively small compared to the European and Asian peaks. But, in any case, the 'Victoria' will have no difficulty to overcome them."

In a short time the gas was dilated and the balloon took a very decided upward course. The expansion of the hydrogen had nothing dangerous in its character either, for the vast balloon was not filled to more than three-quarters its capacity. The barometer now, by a depression of eight inches, showed they had attained an elevation of 6,000 feet.

"Shall we travel like this long?" asked Joe.

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"The terrestrial atmosphere extends to a distance of 6,000 fathoms from the earth," replied the doctor. "With a very large balloon we could go a great height. Messrs. Brioschi and Gay-Lussac did so, but the blood gushed from their ears and mouth. The air could not be breathed. Some years ago two hardy Frenchmen, Banel and Bixio, also made an expedition into the higher regions, but their balloon split."

"And they fell down?" demanded Kennedy anxiously.

"Certainly; but, as scientific men ought to fall, without sustaining any injury."

"Well, gentlemen," said Joe, "you are quite at liberty to begin your tumbling; but, for my part, as I am merely a commonplace person, I prefer to remain in the happy medium, neither too high nor too low. There is no use in being ambitious!"

At 6,000 feet elevation the density of the air became sensibly diminished, sounds were with difficulty transmitted, and speaking was not distinctly heard. Views of objects became confused, the vision could not distinguish anything more than confused masses. Men and other animals became absolutely invisible. The roads became threads, and the lakes ponds.

The doctor and his companions were in a very abnormal state. An atmospheric current of great violence carried them over the mountains, upon whose summits the large snow-fields caused them some astonishment. The appearance of these mountains betokened some convulsion of the sea during the first ages of the world's existence.

The sun shone in the zenith, and his rays fell directly upon these deserted summits. The doctor made an exact plan of these mountains, which are formed of four distinct elevations almost in a straight line, and of which the most northern is the longest.

The "Victoria" soon descended on the farther side of the Rubeho, and passed over a wooded region in which trees of a peculiarly dark green were freely scattered. Then came crests and ravines in a sort of desert, which approaches the territory of Ugogo. Lower down they sailed over yellow plains, scorched, fissured, and here and there amongst the desolation appeared saline plants and thorny bushes. Some coppices, not far removed from actual forests,

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studded the horizon. The doctor now approached the ground, the grapnels were cast out, and one of them soon got fixed in the branches of an immense sycamore.

Joe, sliding quickly into the tree, fixed the grapnel with great care. The doctor left his blow-pipe sufficiently active to ensure a certain ascensional force in the balloon, which would keep it upright. The wind had rather suddenly dropped.

"Now," said Ferguson, "take a couple of guns, friend Dick, for yourself and Joe, and see if you two cannot bring back some prime slices of antelope for dinner."

"Hurrah for the chase!" cried Kennedy.

They descended. Joe let himself slide from branch to branch, as if he wished to dislocate his limbs. The doctor, relieved of the weight of his companions, was enabled to reduce his blow-pipe altogether.

"Don't you fly away, sir, please," cried Joe.

"Be quite easy, my lad; I am firmly fixed here. I am about to put my notes in order. Good sport to you, and be prudent. Meantime, from my post I shall keep a good look-out, and at the least suspicious incident I will fire a shot. That shall be the signal for return."

"All right," replied the sportsmen.

CHAPTER XIV

ARRIVAL AT KAZEH

THE country, arid and parched, of a clayey soil that cracked with the heat, appeared deserted. Here and there some traces of caravans might be perceived, and the blanched bones of men and animals, half gnawed, lay mingling in the same dust.

After half an hour's walking, Dick and Joe plunged into a gum-tree forest, with eyes on the alert, and their fingers upon the triggers of their rifles. They did not know with what they might meet. Without being a first-rate shot, Joe could manage firearms very well.

"It does one good to walk, Mr. Dick, though this country is not the most level," said Joe, kicking aside some of the fragments of rock with which the ground was strewn.

Kennedy signed to his companion to hold his tongue,

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and to stop. They were obliged to dispense with dogs, and despite the agility of Joe, he did not possess the nose of a pointer or of a harrier. In the bed of a torrent, where some small pools still lingered, a herd of twelve antelopes were quenching their thirst. These graceful animals, scenting danger, appeared restless; between each draught they would raise their pretty heads quickly, and sniff the air with their mobile nostrils.

Kennedy passed around some massive trees, while Joe remained motionless. The Scot leveled and fired. The herd disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, all except a fine buck, which, hit in the shoulder, fell dead. Kennedy rushed forward to secure the booty. It was a "blawebock," a splendid animal of a pale blue tint, tending to gray; the belly and inside of the legs was of a snowy whiteness.

"A capital shot," cried the sportsman. "This is a very rare species of antelope, and I hope I shall be able to prepare his skin."

"You really think of doing so, Mr. Dick?"

"Certainly; what a splendid coat the fellow has got."

"But what will Doctor Ferguson say to such an additional weight?"

"Right, Joe. But it is a pity to leave such a splendid animal as that."

"Altogether, no, sir; we will cut off the best bits, and, if you will allow me, I will do it as well as the Lord Mayor's butcher himself."

"Very well, my friend, but nevertheless you must know that it is no more difficult for me to cut up the game than to kill it."

"I am quite sure of that, Mr. Dick; so, if it will not trouble you, make a fireplace out of three stones; there is a quantity of dead wood, and I only ask a few minutes before I shall be ready to make use of your hot embers."

"That will not be long," said Kennedy, who proceeded to the construction of his fireplace, which was ready, blazing, a minute or two later.

Joe meantime had cut from the antelope a dozen excellent cutlets and the tenderest portions of the fillet, which were soon transformed into a most savory grill.

"Won't this please friend Samuel," said Dick.

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"Do you know what I am thinking of, Mr. Richard?"

"Of what you are about; the steaks, no doubt."

"Not at all. I am thinking what a figure we should cut if we could not find the balloon."

"Goodness! Do you imagine that the doctor would abandon us?"

"Oh no! But suppose the grapnel got loose?"

"Impossible. Besides, Samuel would not be at any difficulty to come down again. He can manage it very well."

"But suppose the wind caught it; he would not be able to bring it back to us in that case."

"Oh! bother, Joe, a truce to your suspicions; you are a regular 'Job's comforter.'"

"Ah! sir, everything is possible in this world; so, as anything might happen, it is well to be prepared for everything——"

At that moment the report of a gun was heard.

"Listen!" cried Joe.

"My carbine! I know the sound," cried Kennedy.

"A signal!"

"Danger for us!"

"Or for him, perhaps."

"Let us go at once."

The sportsmen rapidly packed up the products of their shooting and retraced their steps by means of the "blaze" made by Kennedy upon the trees. The thickness of the foliage prevented them from seeing the "Victoria," from which they could not be very far distant.

A second report was now heard.

"The matter is serious," said Joe.

"Yes, there's another!"

"It seems as if he were defending himself."

"Let us make haste," said Kennedy, and running as quickly as possible, they arrived at the skirts of the wood, and all at once beheld the "Victoria" in its place and the doctor in the car.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Joe.

"What do you see?" asked the Scot.

"A whole tribe of black men down there besieging the balloon."

In fact, about two miles away a number of individuals were pressing, shouting, and jumping at the base of the

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sycamore. Some of them having climbed into the tree were advancing to the highest branches. The danger appeared imminent.

"My master is lost!" cried Joe.

"Let us get on, Joe; coolness and a sharp eye. We hold the lives of four men in our hands. Go ahead."

They had covered a mile with great speed when another shot from the car sent a great fellow, who had been climbing up the rope of the grapnel, tumbling from branch to branch a corpse; he remained suspended twenty feet from the ground, his arms and legs swinging in the air.

"Now, I wonder how the devil he manages that," said Joe.

"Never mind," cried Kennedy, "let us get on."

"Ha! Mr. Kennedy," cried Joe, with a peal of laughter, "it is by his tail—by his tail. He is an ape; they are only apes, all of them!"

"That is better than being men just now," replied Kennedy, as he charged into the midst of the howling band.

It was a troop of apes, and very formidable ones. Ferocious and brutal, they were horrible to behold. However, some further shots easily persuaded them, and this grimacing horde departed, leaving many dead upon the ground.

In a moment Kennedy ascended the ladder, Joe pulled himself into the sycamore, and detached the grapnel; the ladder was close to him, and he entered the balloon without difficulty. Some minutes afterwards the "Victoria" rose in the air and departed towards the west.

"There was an attack!" said Joe. "We began to think you were besieged by the natives."

"They were only apes, fortunately," replied the doctor.

"At a distance the difference is not striking, my dear Samuel."

"Not even when you are close," said Joe.

"However that may be," replied Ferguson, "the apes' attack might have had serious consequences. If the grapnel had given way under their repeated assaults who knows whither the wind might have carried me."

"What did I tell you, Mr. Kennedy?" said Joe.

"Quite right, Joe; but, correct as you are, nevertheless, will you prepare some of those steaks of which the sight alone has given me an appetite."

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"That I can readily believe," said the doctor; "the flesh of the antelope is delicious."

"You can now judge for yourself, sir; dinner is ready."

"Faith," said Kennedy, "these slices of venison have a strange sort of flavor not to be despised."

"Right! I could live upon antelope for ever," cried Joe, with his mouth full, "particularly if I had a glass of grog to wash it down." He prepared the beverage in question, which was relished in silence.

"So far so good," said Joe.

"Very good," added Kennedy.

"I say, Mr. Richard, do you now regret having accompanied us?"

"I should very much like to see the man who could have prevented my coming," said Dick, with a resolute look.

It was then four o'clock in the afternoon. The "Victoria" encountered a more rapid current, the earth was left insensibly, and soon the barometrical column marked an elevation of 1,500 feet above the level of the sea. The doctor was then obliged to keep up his balloon by a strong expansion of hydrogen gas and the blow-pipe worked incessantly. Towards seven o'clock the "Victoria" crossed the basin of the Kanyemé, the doctor took observations also of this vast clearing of ten miles in width, with its villages hidden among baobabs and gourds. There one of the sultans of Ugogo has his residence, and civilization is perhaps less backward. They very seldom sell members of their families there, but beasts and men all live together in the round, unfitted huts, which look like haystacks.

After passing Kanyemé the ground became arid and stony, but after an hour in a fertile valley, vegetation reappeared in all its luxuriance at a little distance from Mdaburu. The wind went down with the sun, and the air even seemed to go to sleep. The doctor searched in vain for a current at different altitudes, and seeing how still everything was he resolved to pass the night in the air, and for greater safety he went up to 1,000 feet high. The "Victoria" remained motionless. The night was starlit, and passed without incident.

Dick and Joe stretched themselves upon their quiet couch and slept soundly during the doctor's watch. At midnight the doctor was replaced by Kennedy.

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"Mind you wake me up if the slightest thing occurs," said the doctor; "and, above all things, keep your eyes upon the barometer. That is our compass."

The night was cold. There were twenty-seven degrees difference between its temperature and that of the day. With darkness rose the nocturnal concert of the animals which hunger and thirst drove from their lairs: the frogs sang their soprano, increased by the yelpings of the jackals, while the *basso profundo* of the lions sustained the music of this living orchestra.

When he got up in the morning Doctor Ferguson consulted his compass, and perceived that the wind had changed during the night. The "Victoria" had drifted about thirty miles to the northwest in about two hours. It had passed over Mabunguru, a very stony region, strewn with blocks of syenite of a beautiful polish, and dotted with rocks upon the shelving ridges; conical masses, like the pillars of Karnak, stuck up from the ground as high as Druidical "dolmens." Numerous skeletons of buffaloes and elephants lay blanching here and there. There were few trees except in the east, where some villages lay concealed in the midst of deep woods.

About seven o'clock a round rock, nearly two miles in extent, appeared, wearing the appearance of the back of an enormous tortoise.

"We are having a pleasant trip," said Doctor Ferguson. "There is Jihoue-la-Mkoa, where we shall stay for a little time. I must replenish the water-tanks; let us catch hold of something."

"There are very few trees," said Kennedy.

"Let us try, nevertheless. Joe, throw out the grapnels."

The balloon, by degrees, lost its ascending power, and approached the ground, the fluke of one of the grapnels caught in a fissure of a rock, and the "Victoria" halted.

You must not imagine that Doctor Ferguson was able to completely stop the action of the blow-pipe during these halts. The equilibrium of the balloon had been reckoned at the level of the sea; now the country was continually on the ascent, and they were elevated 600 or 700 feet above the sea level, so the balloon had the tendency to descend lower even than the surface of the ground. It was, therefore, necessary to sustain it by a certain expansion of gas,

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Only in the event of the absence of all wind, if the doctor had left the car to sleep on the ground, the balloon, then divested of a considerable weight, would be maintained in its position without the assistance of the blow-pipe.

The maps showed vast pools of water upon the western side of Jihoue-la-Mkoa. Joe went off with a barrel which might contain a dozen gallons; he found the place indicated without difficulty, not far from a small deserted village, took a supply of water, and returned to the balloon in less than three-quarters of an hour. He had seen nothing particular, except immense elephant traps; he narrowly escaped falling into one of them, in which a half-eaten carcass was lying. He found and brought back a sort of medlar, which the monkeys eat voraciously. The doctor recognized it as the fruit of the "mbenbu," a very common tree on the west part of Jihoue-la-Mkoa. Ferguson waited somewhat impatiently for Joe, for even a short stay upon that inhospitable land filled him with fear.

The water was hoisted in without difficulty, for the car was brought close to the ground. Joe was able to take up the grapnel and mount nimbly after his master, who at once set the flame going, and the "Victoria" resumed her aërial voyage.

They were then 100 miles from Kazeh, an important settlement in the interior, where, thanks to a southeasterly current, the travelers had hopes of arriving during the day. They progressed at about fourteen miles an hour, the management of the balloon became rather difficult, they could not rise very high without expanding too much gas, for the country was already nearly 3,000 feet high. The doctor preferred to restrain the expansion as much as possible, so he very adroitly followed the windings of a somewhat steep declivity, and passed very near to the villages of Themba and Tura Wells. This latter is situated in Unyamwezy, a magnificent region, where the trees attain enormous dimensions, and the cactus amongst others, which are gigantic.

About two o'clock, in splendid weather, beneath a scorching sun, which absorbed the least current of air, the "Victoria" hovered above the town of Kazeh, situated about 350 miles from the coast.

"We left Zanzibar at nine o'clock in the morning," said

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Doctor Ferguson, consulting his notes, and after two days' traveling we have accomplished, including our deviations, nearly 500 geographical miles. Captains Burton and Speke took four months and a half to accomplish the same distance.

CHAPTER XV

THE SONS OF THE MOON

KAZEH, an important place in Central Africa, is scarcely a town properly so called; there is not a town in the interior, and Kazeh is only a collection of six immense intrenched camps. Within these are collected the houses and huts of slaves with small courts and gardens, carefully cultivated with onions, yams, melons, pumpkins, and mushrooms of a perfect flavor there grown to perfection.

Unyamwezy is the veritable Land of the Moon, the fertile and beautiful park of Africa, in the center of the district of the Unyanembé, a delightful country, where some Omani families, who are Arabs of the purest blood, live in idleness. These people have for a long time trafficked in the interior of Africa and in Arabia; they deal in gum, ivory, striped cloths, slaves; their caravans penetrate these equatorial regions in all directions; they there seek upon the coast objects of pleasure and luxury for the rich merchants, and they, surrounded by wives and slaves, live in this beautiful country and enjoy an existence the least agitated and the most horizontal possible, always stretched at full length, laughing, smoking, or sleeping.

Around the camps are numerous native huts, large spaces for the market fields of cannabis and datuna, of lovely trees and most refreshing shade. Such is Kazeh.

There is also the general rendezvous for the caravans, those from the south with slaves and ivory, and from the west, which bring cotton and glassware to the tribes around the Great Lakes. Also in the market there is a continual movement, a regular hubbub, in which the cries of the half-breed porters mingle with the sound of drums and cornets, the whinnying of mules, the braying of donkeys, the songs of women, the crying of children, and the blows of the rattan of the jemidar, who beats the time in this pastoral symphony.

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There are the wares exposed for sale without any kind of order, even in a charming disorder. Showy stuffs, colored glass beads, ivory rhinoceros' teeth, sharks' teeth, honey, tobacco, and cotton. There they carry on the most strange bargains, each object having just so much value as it excites desire.

Suddenly this hubbub and movement ceased, the noise immediately subsided. The "Victoria" had appeared in the sky, sailing along majestically and descending slowly without losing its vertical position. Men, women, children, slaves, merchants, Arabs, and negroes all disappeared and glided away into the "tembes" and beneath the huts.

"My dear Samuel," said Kennedy, "if we continue to produce such an effect as this we shall have some difficulty to establish commercial relations with these people."

"There is, nevertheless, one very simple mercantile transaction to be carried out," said Joe; "that is, to quietly descend and carry away the most valuable merchandise without troubling the merchants. We should then get rich."

"You see," said the doctor, "that the natives have only been terrified for the moment. They will not delay to return, impelled either by superstition or curiosity."

"You think so, sir?"

"We shall soon see, but it will be prudent to keep at a little distance. The 'Victoria' is neither an ironclad nor armored. There is no shelter from a bullet nor from an arrow."

"Do you then intend to enter into conference with these Africans, my dear Samuel?"

"Perhaps so—why not? There ought to be in Kazeh Arab merchants who are not ignorant men. I remember that Messrs. Burton and Speke were much pleased with the hospitality of this town. So we can try our luck."

The "Victoria" gradually approached the earth, and made fast one of the grapnels to the top of a tree near the market-place.

The entire population now turned out; heads were cautiously advanced. Many "Waganga," easily recognizable by their badges of shell-fish, advanced boldly. They were the sorcerers of the place. They carried at the waist small gourds rubbed over with grease, and many objects of magic use of a dirtiness, nevertheless, quite professional.

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By degrees the crowd advanced to the sorcerers, the women and children surrounding them, the drummers rivaled each other in din, hands were clasped and held up towards the sky.

"That is their manner of praying," said Doctor Ferguson. "If I am not in error, we shall be called upon to undertake an important part."

"Very well, sir," said Joe, "play it."

"Even you, my brave Joe, may perhaps become a god."

"Well, sir, that won't worry me much, and the incense will be rather agreeable than otherwise."

At this moment one of the sorcerers, a "Waganga," made a gesture, and the clamor sank into profound silence. He addressed some words to the travelers, but in a tongue unknown to them.

Doctor Ferguson, not understanding what was said, replied at hazard in a few words of Arabic, and was immediately answered in that language.

The orator then delivered a flowing speech, very flowery and very distinct. The doctor had no difficulty in perceiving that the "Victoria" was actually taken for the moon in person, and that this amiable goddess had deigned to approach the town with her three sons, an honor which would never be forgotten in that country—beloved by the sun.

The doctor replied, with great dignity, that the moon made every thousand years a departmental tour, feeling the necessity of showing herself to her worshipers. He then prayed them to take advantage of her divine presence by making known their wants and vows.

The sorcerer replied that the sultan, the "Mwani," had been ill for many years, had asked the assistance of Heaven, and he now begged the sons of the moon to come to him.

The doctor imparted the invitation to his companions.

"And will you go to that nigger king?" said the Scotchman.

"Certainly. These people appear to me to be well disposed, the day is calm, there is scarcely a breath of wind. We have nothing to fear for the "Victoria."

"But what will you do?"

"Be quiet, my dear Dick; with a little medicine I will manage to get out of it."

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Then addressing the crowd he said: "The moon, taking pity upon the sovereign, so dear to the people of Unyamwezy, has confided his recovery to our hands. Let him prepare to receive us."

The cries, shouts, and gesticulations were redoubled, and the entire vast "ant-hill" of black heads was in motion.

"Now, my friends," said Doctor Ferguson, "it will be necessary to be ready for anything; we may be obliged to retreat at any moment. Dick shall remain in the car, and by means of the blow-pipe, keep up a sufficient ascensional power. The grapnel is firmly fixed, so there is no danger on that score. I will get down, Joe will also get out, but will remain at the foot of the ladder."

"What, are you going alone to this blackamoor's house?" asked Kennedy.

"Why, Mr. Samuel, don't you wish me to accompany you through this?" said Joe.

"No, I shall go alone: these people imagine that the moon has come to pay them a visit. I am protected by their superstition, so have no fear, and let each one remain at his post as I have arranged."

"Since you wish it," said the Scot, "it shall be so."

"Mind you attend to the expansion of the gas."

"All right."

The cries of the natives again increased, they demanded the intervention of heaven very energetically indeed.

"Do you hear?" cried Joe. "I think they are a little too dictatorial to their beautiful moon and her sons."

The doctor, supplied with his medicine-chest, came out of the balloon, preceded by Joe, and descended. The latter was as grave and dignified as was in his nature to be. He sat down at the foot of the ladder, and crossed his legs, Arab-fashion—a portion of the crowd surrounded him at a respectful distance.

Meantime, Doctor Ferguson, preceded by musicians, and escorted by religious dancers, advanced slowly towards the royal "tembe," situated some distance from the town. It was now about three o'clock, and the sun was shining hotly —he could not do less under the circumstances.

The doctor advanced with dignity; the Waganga surrounded him, and kept back the crowd. Ferguson was soon joined by the natural son of the sultan, a well-made

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young fellow, who, following the custom of the country, was the sole inheritor of the parent's goods and possessions, to the exclusion of legitimate children. He prostrated himself before the son of the moon, who raised him with a gracious gesture.

Three-quarters of an hour afterwards, through shady paths in the midst of a luxuriant tropical vegetation, the enthusiastic procession arrived at the palace of the sultan, a kind of square house, called Itiitenya, and situated upon the slope of a hill. A species of veranda, made by the straw roof, covered the exterior, and was supported by wooden posts, with some pretension to carving displayed upon them. Long streaks of reddish clay ornamented the walls, attempts to depict men and snakes, the latter being naturally more successful than the former. The roof of this habitation did not rest directly upon the walls, so the air could circulate freely, though there were no windows and scarcely a door.

Doctor Ferguson was received with great honors by the guards and favorites, men of a handsome race, the Unyamwezi, a pure type of the population of Central Africa, strong and healthy, well made, and erect in their bearing. Their hair, divided into a quantity of small curls, fell down upon their shoulders; and by means of incisions colored black or blue, they tattooed their cheeks from the temples to the mouth. Their ears, very much distended, were ornamented with discs of wood and gum copal; they were clothed with emeu, brilliantly colored; the soldiers, well armed with bows and arrows—the latter poisoned and barbed—with cutlasses and "simes," a long saw-toothed sword, and hatchets.

The doctor entered the palace. There, in describing the sultan's symptoms, the hubbub, already great, was redoubled. The doctor remarked on the lintel of the door that tails of hares and zebras' manes were suspended as talismans. He was received by a troop of Her Majesty's ladies to the harmonious accompaniment of the "upatu," a kind of cymbal constructed from the bottom of copper pots, and of the "kilindo," a drum about five feet high, hollowed out from the trunk of a tree, and which is played by two performers, hammering it as hard as possible with their fists.

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The greater number of the women appeared very pretty, and laughingly smoked tobacco and "thang" in large black pipes. They appeared to be well formed, so far as the long and graceful robe permitted their figures to be seen, and wore a kind of kilt of calabash fibers fastened round their waists.

Six of them, though destined to be sacrificed, were by no means the least gay of the assembly. At the death of the sultan they were to be buried alive with him, so as to keep him company in his otherwise somewhat distressing solitude.

Doctor Ferguson, having taken all this in at a glance, advanced towards the monarch's couch. There he saw a man of about forty, perfectly brutalized by dissipation of all kinds, and for whom he could do nothing. His malady, which had lasted some years, was nothing but constant intoxication. This royal drunkard had by degrees lost consciousness, and all the ammonia in the world could not cure him.

The favorites and the women, bending their knees, bowed themselves down during this solemn visit. By means of a few drops of a strong cordial, the doctor for a moment animated the stupefied body. The sultan moved, and for a corpse which had given no sign of existence for hours, to move at all was hailed with acclamation in honor of the doctor.

He, who had had enough of it, put his would-be worshipers aside by a rapid movement, and quitted the palace. He made towards the "Victoria," for it was now six o'clock.

Joe, during his master's absence, waited patiently at the foot of the ladder, the crowd paying him the greatest attention. As a true son of the moon he accepted the position. For a god he had the appearance of a brave man enough, not at all proud, even with young African ladies, who never ceased to stare at him. He also conversed amicably with them.

"Keep worshiping, ladies, keep it up," he said. "I am a pretty good sort of devil, although the son of a goddess."

They offered him propitiatory gifts, usually placed in the "mzimu" or fetish-houses. These consisted of barley

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and "pembe." Joe felt himself constrained to taste this species of strong beer, but his palate, though not unaccustomed to gin or whisky, could not stand that. He made a fearful grimace, which the audience took for an amiable smile.

Then the young girls, setting up a slow sort of chanting, executed a solemn dance round him.

"Ah! you dance, do you? Very well, I will not be behind-hand with you, and will show you a dance of my country."

He then began a most extraordinary kind of a jig, turning over, throwing himself about in all directions, dancing on his feet, on his knees, on his hands, and twisting himself in the most extraordinary contortions and incredible positions, accompanied by the most horrible grimaces, thus giving the people a strange notion of the manner in which the gods dance in the moon.

Now all Africans are as imitative as apes, and very quickly did his audience reproduce his behavior, gambols, and contortions; they did not lose a gesture, they did not forget an attitude; the result being a hubbub and commotion of which it is difficult to give the least idea. In the midst of all this festivity Joe perceived the doctor.

He was approaching hastily in the center of a yelling and disordered crowd. The sorcerers and priests appeared to be the most excited. They surrounded and pressed upon the doctor with threatening gestures. What a strange alteration. What had happened? Had the sultan unfortunately died under the celestial doctor's hands?

Kennedy, from his position, perceived the danger without comprehending the cause. The balloon, pulling strongly, was stretching the rope that held it as if impatient to rise into the air.

The doctor came to the foot of the ladder. A superstitious fear still kept back the crowd, and prevented their using violence; he rapidly ascended and Joe followed.

"There is not an instant to lose," said his master. "Never mind detaching the grapnel. We must cut the cord. Follow me."

"What is it?" said Joe, ascending.

"What has happened?" cried Kennedy, carbine in hand.

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"Look there!" replied the doctor, pointing towards the horizon.

"Well?" asked the Scot.

"Well! it's the *moon!*"

In fact the moon, red and glorious as a globe of fire upon an azure background, was then rising—she and the "Victoria" together.

Either, therefore, there were two moons, or the strangers were nothing but impostors and false gods. Such were the natural thoughts of the crowd. Hence the change.

Joe could not help laughing heartily. The people of Kazeh, beginning to understand that their prey would escape, gave vent to prolonged howls, and bows and guns were directed towards the balloon. But at a sign from one of the sorcerers the weapons were lowered, he jumped into the tree with the intention to seize the rope of the grapnel and bring the balloon to the ground.

Joe leaned over with a hatchet in his hand.

"Shall I cut it?" he asked.

"Wait a little," said the doctor.

"But that nigger——"

"We may perhaps save our grapnel, and I think so. We can cut it at any time."

The sorcerer, having gained the tree, went to work so vigorously in the branches that he detached the grapnel, which, being violently dragged by the balloon, caught the sorcerer between the legs, and so he, astride on this unexpected steed, set out for the region of the sky.

The crowd were stupefied to perceive one of their Waganga launched into space.

"Hurrah!" cried Joe, as the "Victoria" mounted very rapidly.

"He holds tight," said Kennedy; "a little journey will do him good."

"Shall we let him go altogether?" suggested Joe.

"For shame!" replied the doctor. "We will put him gently down presently, and I believe that after such an adventure his magical power will be singularly increased in his companions' estimation."

"I daresay they will make a god of him," said Joe.

The "Victoria" had now arrived at an elevation of about 1,000 feet. The negro held on to the cord with tre-

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mendous energy. He was quite silent, and his eyes were fixed. His terror mastered his astonishment completely. A light breeze carried the balloon below the town.

Half an hour later, the doctor, seeing the coast was clear, moderated the blow-pipe, and approached the earth. At twenty feet from the ground the sorcerer took courage and dropped, fell upon his feet, and ran towards Kazeh at the top of his speed, while the "Victoria" once more ascended into the air.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FUTURE OF AFRICA

"THERE!" cried Joe, "that comes of being sons of the moon without leave. That satellite was very nearly playing us a shabby trick. Do you think, now, sir, that you in any way compromised her reputation by your medicine?"

"By-the-by," said the Scot, "who is this sultan of Kazeh?"

"An old, half-dead drunkard, whose loss will not be very much felt; but the moral of the thing is this: that honors are ephemeral, and we ought only to taste them."

"So much the worse," said Joe; "that was my case. To be adored, to play the god at one's pleasure, when, all of a sudden, the moon rises with a very red face to show she does not approve of it."

During this conversation, and subsequently, while Joe was examining the evening star from an entirely new point of view, the sky towards the north was covering itself with heavy clouds—with heavy and threatening clouds too. A pretty brisk breeze had sprung up at 300 feet from the ground, and was impelling the "Victoria" towards the north-northwest. The sky was clear, but the air felt heavy.

The travelers found themselves about eight o'clock in 32° 40′ longitude, and latitude 4° 17′; the atmospheric currents, under the influence of an approaching storm, hurried them forward at the rate of thirty-five miles an hour. The fertile and undulating plains of Mfuto passed rapidly beneath. The view was worthy of admiration, and was duly admired.

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"We are now regularly in the country of the moon," said Doctor Ferguson, "for it has retained this name, which was anciently bestowed upon it, doubtless, because the moon has been always worshiped here. It is indeed a magnificent district, and it would be difficult to find a more beautiful vegetation."

"That sort of thing would not be natural near London," said Joe, "but it would be very pleasant. Why are all those lovely things reserved for these barbarous countries?"

"How do you know that some day this country will not have become the center of civilization? The people of the future ages may come here when the countries of Europe can no longer support their inhabitants."

"Do you believe that?" asked Kennedy.

"Certainly, my dear Dick. Look at the march of events, consider the successive emigrations of the human race, and you will arrive at the same conclusion as I have. Is it not true that Asia was the first nurse of the world? For 4,000 years, perhaps, she was fruitful and bore her children, and then when stones appear where the golden crops of Homer appeared, her children leave her dry and withered bosom. They then are seen invading Europe, young and strong, which nourishes them for 2,000 years. But she is already losing her fertility, her producing qualities are diminishing every day; these new evils each year which attack the produce of the soil, the deceptive harvests, the insufficient supplies, all are undoubted signs of decreasing vitality, of approaching weakness. Also, you can already perceive that people are throwing themselves upon the richer bosom of America, not indeed inexhaustible, but still inexhausted. In its turn, this newer Continent will become old. Its virgin forests will fall under the ax of industry, its soil will be enervated, because it had produced too much, as too much was demanded of it.

"There, where two crops would grow every year, scarcely one will come to the sickle. Then Africa will offer to new generations the accumulated treasures of centuries. The fatality of the climate to strangers will yield to the purifying influence of distribution of crops and drainage; the scattered streams will be united in one navigable river; and this district, over which we are passing,

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more fertile, richer, quicker producing than the others, will become some great kingdom, where discoveries will be made even more wonderful than steam and the electric telegraph."

"Ah, sir," said Joe, "I should like to see all that."

"You were born a trfle too soon," said the doctor.

"After all, that will be perhaps a more tiresome period, in which industry will absorb all to its profit. In consequence of inventing machines, men will be devoured by them. I am always picturing to myself that the last day of the world will be when some immense boiler, heated up to three thousand millions of atmospheres, will blow our globe into space."

"And I daresay the Americans will not be the last to work at the machine," said Joe. "In fact, those people are wonderful tinkers; but, without letting ourselves be carried away by such discussions, let us admire the 'Land of the Moon,' since we are in a position to see it."

The sun was pouring his last rays beneath the heaped-up masses of cloud, and was gilding the small elevations with a golden crest. The huge trees, arborescent herbs, the cut corn, all had a share of the luminous rays. The earth, gently undulating, rose here and there into little conical hills. There were no mountains to break the horizon. Immense brambly palisades, impassable hedges, thorny jungles separated the clear spaces in which numerous villages were spread out. The gigantic euphorbia surrounded them with natural fortifications, entwining themselves with the coral-like branches of the shrubs.

They soon came in sight of the Malagazari, the principal tributary of Lake Tanganyika, which wound round the verdant masses of vegetation. Into this river ran numerous watercourses, born of the torrents overflowed during the great rising of the waters, or from ponds hollowed out in the clayey soil. It appeared to the observers, elevated as they were, that a regular network of rivulets was flowing over the face of the country.

Immense beasts with humps were feeding in the prairies, and occasionally disappeared altogether in the long grass; the forests, of a wonderful species of trees, appeared like enormous bouquets, but in these bouquets, lions, leopards, hyenas, and tigers took refuge from the declin-

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ing heat of the day. Sometimes an elephant made the coppices shake, and they distinctly heard the crashing of the trees which gave way before his tusks.

"What a hunting country!" exclaimed Kennedy, enthusiastically; "a bullet sent in there at hazard, right into the forest, would meet with game worthy of it. Can we not have a try at it?"

"No, no, my dear Dick; night is upon us, and a rather 'nasty' night too, bringing a storm up with it. Storms in this country are no joke, I can tell you, where the earth plays the part of an immense electric battery."

"You are right, sir," said Joe; "the heat is becoming stifling, the breeze has quite died away, and one feels that something is going to happen."

"The atmosphere is surcharged with electricity," replied the doctor; "every living thing is aware of the state of the air which precedes a conflict of the elements; but I confess I never have been impregnated with it at such a height myself."

"Well," said the Scot, "should we not rather descend?"

"On the contrary, Dick, I would rather go higher up. I fear only to be hurried out of my course during the cross atmospheric currents."

"Do you wish, then, to abandon our route towards the coast?"

"If possible," replied Ferguson, "I will go more directly towards the north for seven or eight degrees. I will endeavor to go up towards the supposed latitude of the sources of the Nile. Perhaps we shall discover some traces of Captain Speke's expedition, or even the caravan of M. de Heuglin. If my calculations be correct, we are in 32° 40″ longitude, and I should like to go up beyond the equator."

"Look here," cried Kennedy, interrupting, "look at those hippopotami swimming about the pools—what masses of flesh they are—and see the crocodiles gasping in their attempts to breathe."

"They are choking," said Joe. "Ah! what a splendid way this is to travel, and how we can despise all those horrible vermin. Mr. Samuel, Mr. Kennedy—look at those bands of animals marching closely together. There must be 200 of them, at least; they are wolves."

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"No, Joe, but wild dogs; a famous breed, which have no scruple in attacking lions. To meet such a pack is the most fearful experience a traveler can undergo. He would be immediately torn in pieces."

"Well, it will not be Joseph who will endeavor to muzzle them," replied that pleasant youth; "after all, it is their nature, and one needn't see much of them."

All this time a dread silence was falling around little by little, under the influence of the approaching storm. It seemed as if the heavy air had become incapable of transmitting sounds; the atmosphere appeared thickened, and, like a room hung with tapestry, lost all sonorousness. The pigeons, the crested crane, the red and blue jays, the mocking birds, the moucherolles, hid themselves in the leafy trees. All nature betrayed the symptoms of an approaching convulsion. At nine o'clock in the evening, the "Victoria" was hanging motionless above Mséné, a large collection of villages scarcely distinguishable in the gloom. Sometimes the reflection of stray beams of light in the dark water indicated the regularly placed ditches, and, by an opening in the clouds, they could descry the dark forms of palms, tamarinds, sycamores, and the gigantic euphorbia.

"I am stifled," said the Scot, taking a full breath. "We are not moving any longer. Shall we descend?"

"But how about the storm?" said the doctor, who was not very comfortable.

"If you are afraid of being carried away by the wind, it seems to me you can do nothing else."

"The storm may not burst to-night," replied Joe; "the clouds are very high."

"That is the very reason I am hesitating to pass them; we should have to go so very high up, and lose sight of the earth, and would not know all night whether we were making any 'way,' or, if so, in what direction we were moving."

"Well, make up your mind, my dear Samuel; time presses."

"It is very annoying that the wind has dropped," said Joe; "it might have carried us out of reach of the storm."

"That is certainly to be regretted, my friends, as the clouds are very dangerous; they contain opposing currents, which may enclose us in their whirlwinds, and the light-

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ning may set us on fire. On the other hand, the force of the squall might precipitate us to the ground if we made fast the grapnel to the top of a tree."

"Then what is to be done?"

"We must keep the "Victoria" in a middle zone between the earth and the perils of the sky. We have a sufficient quantity of water for the blow-pipe, and our 200 lbs. of ballast is intact."

"We are going to sit up with you," said the Scot.

"No, my friends; put the provisions under cover and go to bed. I will call you if necessary."

"But, sir, why will you not take some rest yourself, since nothing threatens us yet?"

"No, thank you, my lad, I would rather watch. We are motionless, and if circumstances do not change we shall find ourselves in the same place to-morrow."

"Good-night, sir."

"Good-night, if that be possible."

Kennedy and Joe then lay down, and the doctor remained by himself—alone in space. Nevertheless, the clouds insensibly descended and the darkness became profound.

The black arch of heaven spread across the terrestrial globe as if about to overwhelm it.

Suddenly a vivid flash lit up the gloom; the opening in the cloud had scarcely closed when a terrific peal of thunder shook the depths of the sky.

"Get up, get up!" cried Ferguson. The two sleepers, roused by the appalling thunder-crash, held themselves in readiness to execute his orders.

"Are you going down?" asked Kennedy.

"No; the balloon would never hold out there. Let us ascend before the rain comes and the wind gets up." And he rapidly urged the flame of the blow-pipe.

Tropical storms are developed with a rapidity proportionate to their violence. A second flash broke the cloud. and was immediately followed by twenty others. The sky was radiant with electric sparks, which shriveled up under the heavy drops of rain.

"We have delayed too long," said the doctor. "We must now pass through a belt of fire with our balloon filled with inflammable air."

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"But the ground, the ground!" repeated Kennedy.

"The risk of being struck would be almost the same, and we should be quickly knocked to pieces against the branches of trees," said the doctor.

"We are ascending, Mr. Samuel."

"Quicker! quicker!"

In this part of Africa, during the equinoctial gales, it is not an uncommon experience to count thirty to thirty-five flashes of lightning per minute. The sky is literally on fire, and the thunder is continuous. The wind rages with terrific violence in this fiery atmosphere, it twists and tears the clouds, and it has been compared to the blowing of an immense bellows which keeps all this fire in activity.

Doctor Ferguson maintained his blow-pipe at full pressure; the balloon expanded and ascended. On his knees in the center of the car Kennedy kept hold of the curtains of the tent. The balloon gyrated enough to give the travelers vertigo, and they suffered from the uneven oscillations. Huge hollows showed in the shape of the balloon pressed upon by the blasts. The silk covering strained to the utmost and crackled like a volley of pistol shots.

A sort of hail, preceded by a rushing sound, hissed through the air and rattled upon the "Victoria." It nevertheless continued to ascend; the lightning described flaming tangents from its circumference; it was in the very heart of the storm.

"God preserve us!" said Ferguson, "we are in His hands. He alone can save us. Let us be prepared for any event, even for fire; our fall cannot be very rapid."

The doctor's voice was scarcely heard by his companions, but they could see him standing unmoved in the midst of the flashing lightnings; and he kept looking at the "corpse-light" that flickered upon the network of the balloon. The balloon itself swayed and rolled, but kept ascending; at the end of fifteen minutes it had passed the line of storm-cloud. The electric discharges were now beneath it like an immense crown of artificial fire hanging from the car.

This was one of the most beautiful sights that nature could present to man. Below the storm raged. Above was the starry, quiet, and silent Heaven, with the moon throwing her peaceful rays upon the angry clouds.

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Doctor Ferguson looked at the barometer; it indicated 12,000 feet elevation. The time was eleven o'clock.

"Thank Heaven the danger is over," said he; "we have now only to remain here as we are."

"It was awful," said Kennedy.

"Yes," replied Joe, "that gives a little change to our journey, and I am not sorry to have seen a storm from such a height. It was a magnificent sight indeed."

CHAPTER XVII
NIGHT ON THE GROUND

About six o'clock in the morning (Sunday) the sun rose above the horizon, the clouds dispersed and a most pleasant breeze tempered the first rays of the morning light.

The sweetly-refreshed earth again became visible to the travelers. The balloon, having been turning round in the midst of opposing currents, had scarcely drifted at all, and the doctor, permitting the gas to contract, descended at length to strike a more northerly direction. For a long time his search was in vain, the breeze carried him to the west, even within sight of the celebrated Mountains of the Moon, which rise up in a semicircle round the end of Lake Tanganyika. Their chain, but little broken, stood out against the bluish horizon—a natural fortification, as it were, impassable to explorers of the center of Africa; some of the peaks bore traces of eternal snow.

"We are now in an unexplored country," said the doctor; "Captains Burton and Speke advanced far into the west, but they were not able to reach these celebrated mountains. Burton even denied their existence as affirmed by his companion; he pretended that they only existed in the imagination of the latter. For us, my friends, no doubt is possible."

"Shall we pass over them?" asked Kennedy.

"I hope not. I expect to find a favorable wind to bring me back to the equator. I will wait for it even, if necessary, and treat the 'Victoria' like a ship that casts anchor when the wind is contrary."

The prognostications of the doctor were soon realized.

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After having tried different elevations, the "Victoria" sailed away to the northeast at a moderate speed.

"We are in the right direction," said he, consulting the barometer as he spoke, "and scarcely 200 feet from the ground; the circumstances are most favorable to explore these unknown regions. Captain Speke, when proceeding to discover Lake Ukéréoné, went up more to the east in a straight line above Kazeh."

"Shall we go long in this direction?" asked Kennedy.

"Perhaps. Our aim is to strike a point near the sources of the Nile, and we have more than 600 miles to traverse to the extreme limit reached by the explorers from the north."

"And shall we not put our feet on the ground in order to stretch our legs?" said Joe.

"Yes, certainly. We must also be sparing of our larder, and on the way you will be able to provide us with fresh meats."

"As soon as ever you like, friend Samuel."

"We shall also have to replenish our supply of water. Who knows we may not be borne away towards barren districts? We must therefore take precautions."

At mid-day the "Victoria" was in 29° 15′ long. and 3° 15′ lat. It passed over the village of Uyofu, the northern boundary of Unyamwezi, abreast of the Lake Ukéréoné, which they had not hitherto been able to perceive. The tribes near the equator appear to be a little more civilized, and are governed by absolute monarchs, whose despotism is unlimited. Their very close union constitutes the province of Karaywah.

The three travelers decided that they would descend at the first favorable landing-place. They proposed to make a lengthy halt, and the balloon was to be carefully examined; so the flame of the blow-pipe was moderated. The grapnels, thrown from the car, soon came in contact with the high grass of an immense prairie; at a little distance it appeared to be covered with close verdure, but in reality the grass was seven or eight feet high.

The "Victoria" skimmed over the grass without bending it, like an immense butterfly. Nothing was in sight; it was like an ocean of verdure without a single wave.

"We may go a long time like this," said Kennedy. "I

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do not perceive a tree to which we can fasten ourselves. It appears to me that the chase must be given up."

"Wait, my dear Dick; you never could hunt in grass higher than yourself. We shall find a favorable place presently."

It was, indeed, a charming excursion—a veritable navigation upon this sea—so beautifully green, almost transparent—undulating softly at the breathing of the wind. The boat now justified its name, and appeared to cleave the waves, except when a flight of birds with splendid plumage escaped sometimes from the high grass, and with a thousand joyous cries broke the illusion. The grapnels plunged into this lake of flowers and formed a furrow which immediately closed behind them like the wake of a vessel.

All at once the balloon experienced a great shock; the grapnel had no doubt been caught in the fissure of a rock concealed beneath the gigantic mass. "We have caught," said Joe.

"All right, throw out the ladder," said Kennedy.

These words had scarcely been uttered, when a sharp cry resounded through the air, and was thus commented upon by the travelers. "What's that?" said one.

"A most singular cry!"

"Hollo! we are moving."

"The anchor has detached."

"No, it is all right," said Joe, who was hauling at the rope. "It is the rock that moves."

A great disturbance was now perceived in the grass, and soon a long and sinuous form raised itself over them. "A serpent!" cried Joe.

"A serpent!" said Kennedy, snatching up a carbine.

"No," said the doctor, "it is the trunk of an elephant."

"An elephant, Samuel?" and Kennedy, as he spoke, brought the gun to his shoulder.

"Wait, Dick, wait."

"Without doubt, the animal will pull us along."

"And in the right direction, Joe."

The elephant advanced with some rapidity, and soon arrived at an open space, where they had an uninterrupted view of him. In his enormous bulk, the doctor recognized the male of a magnificent species; he had two beautiful

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tusks, with a most graceful curve, which appeared about eight feet long—the flukes of the grapnel were firmly fastened between them.

The animal tried in vain with his trunk to loose the cord that bound him to the car.

"Go ahead cheerily!" cried Joe delighted, and doing his best to urge on this strange turn-out. "Here is quite a new way of traveling. Talk of a horse, indeed! An elephant, if you please."

"But where will he lead us to?" asked Kennedy, shifting his gun from hand to hand.

"He will take us wherever he likes, my dear Dick; have a little patience."

"Wig-a-more! wig-a-more! as the Scotch peasants say," cried the delighted Joe. "Go on, go on."

Th animal broke into a rapid gallop, he flung his trunk from right to left, and in his boundings he gave some violent shocks to the car. The doctor, ax in hand, was ready to cut the rope if occasion demanded.

"But," said he, "we will not give up our anchor till the last moment."

This race at the tail of an elephant lasted nearly an hour and a half. The animal did not appear in any way fatigued. These enormous quadrupeds can keep up a trot for a considerable time, and day after day they accomplish immense distances, like the whales, whose size and speed they possess.

"I believe it is a whale we have harpooned," said Joe, "and we are only imitating the maneuvers of the whalers when fishing."

But a change in the nature of the ground obliged the doctor to modify his mode of progression.

A thick wood appeared towards the north of the prairie, about three miles distant; it then became absolutely necessary that the balloon should be separated from its conductor.

So Kennedy was assigned the duty of stopping the elephant. He shouldered his carbine, but his position was not favorable to strike the animal successfully. The first ball fired at the skull was flattened as if against an iron plate. The elephant did not appear the least inconvenienced. At the sound of the discharge he accelerated his

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pace, and his speed was now that of a horse at full gallop.

"The devil!" exclaimed Kennedy.

"What a hard head he must have," said Joe.

"We must try a conical bullet in the shoulder," said Dick, loading his gun with great care. He fired. The elephant uttered a fearful scream, but still went on gallantly.

"Look here," said Joe, taking up one of the rifles, "I must help you, Mr. Dick, or we shall never get to the end of this."

And two bullets were quickly lodged in the flank of the animal. He stopped, raised his trunk high in the air, and then continued his rapid course towards the wood. He kept shaking his enormous head, and blood began to flow from his wounds.

"Let us keep firing, Mr. Dick," said Joe.

"Yes, and well-sustained fire, too," said the doctor; "we are only a few yards from the wood."

Ten shots were rapidly fired; the elephant made a terrific bound; the car and the balloon cracked as if they were coming to pieces. The shock caused the doctor to drop the ax to the ground.

Their situation was critical. The rope of the grapnel was fastened so tightly that it could not be detached, nor could it be cut by the knives the travelers possessed. The balloon was rapidly nearing the wood when the elephant received a bullet in the eye at the moment he raised his head. He stopped, appeared to hesitate for a moment, then his knees bent beneath him, and he exposed his flank to the assailants.

"Now for a bullet in his heart," cried Kennedy, as he discharged his carbine for the last time.

The elephant uttered a roar of agony and distress, half raised himself for an instant as he waved his trunk to and fro, and then fell with all his immense weight upon one of his tusks, which was broken short off. He was dead.

"His tusk is broken," cried Kennedy. "That ivory would fetch thirty-five guineas the hundredweight in England."

"So much for that," said Joe, as he lowered himself to the ground by the grapnel-rope.

"Why these regrets, my dear Dick?" replied the doctor.

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"We are not ivory merchants, and we have not come here to make our fortunes, have we?"

Joe inspected the grapnel. It was still firmly fastened to the remaining tusk. Samuel and Dick got down on the ground while the half-inflated balloon hovered above the carcass of the elephant.

"What a splendid beast," cried Kennedy. "What an enormous mass he is. I have never, even in India, seen such a fine fellow."

"That is not so surprising, my dear Dick. The elephants of Central Africa are the biggest naturally. They have been hunted so much in the neighborhood of the Cape by the Andersons and the Cummings, that they have migrated towards the equator, where we shall frequently meet them in large numbers."

"In the meantime," said Joe, "I hope we shall have a taste of this fellow. I will pledge myself to provide you a savory meal at this gentleman's expense. Mr. Kennedy can go hunting for an hour or two; Mr. Samuel can inspect and overhaul the 'Victoria,' and I will play the cook."

"That is well arranged," replied the doctor. "So each to his occupation."

"Well, I shall take the two hours' liberty that Joe has been so kind as to give me," said Kennedy.

"By all means, my friend, but don't be rash. Do not go too far."

"You may be easy on that score," said Dick; and, armed with his rifle, he plunged into the wood.

Then Joe set about his avocations. First, he made a hole in the ground about two feet deep, which he filled with the dead branches of trees which strewed the ground in consequence of the passages forced through the woods by the elephants, traces of which were clearly seen. The hole filled up, he thrust in at the top a log about two feet long, and set fire to it.

He then turned to the elephant, which had fallen only about fifty yards from the wood, and dexterously cut off the trunk, which measured nearly two feet wide at the head. He chose the most delicate portions, and added one of the sponge-like feet. These are considered the tid-bits of the animal, as is the buffalo-hump, the paws of the bear, or the boar's head.

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When the log was completely consumed inside and outside, the hole, emptied of the cinders and ashes, was very hot, so the pieces of the elephant's flesh, wrapped in aromatic leaves, were laid at the bottom of this improvised furnace, and covered with the hot embers. Then Joe placed a second log over all, and when the wood was burned out, the meat was done to a turn.

Then Joe took the dinner from the oven, placed it upon green leaves, and laid the repast in the center of a meadow-like space. He brought the biscuits, brandy, and coffee, and fetched some fresh and sparkling water from a neighboring stream.

The feast thus sent up was pleasant to behold, and Joe, without vanity, thought that it would be very good to eat.

"Here," he said to himself, "here is a journey without danger, meals when you choose, and sleep when you like: what can a man want more? And that good Mr. Kennedy did not want to come!"

Doctor Ferguson, for his part, was devoting himself to a thorough examination of his balloon. It did not appear to have suffered by the storm, the taffetas and gutta-percha had resisted wonderfully. Taking the actual distance from the ground, and calculating the ascensional force of the balloon, he perceived with satisfaction that the hydrogen was still in the same volume. The envelope up to this time had remained impermeable.

It was only five days since the travelers had quitted Zanzibar, the pemmican had not been cut, the store of biscuit and preserved meat was sufficient for a long period, and they had only to renew their reserve of water. The tubes and the coil appeared to be in perfect order; thanks to their india-rubber joints, they yielded to all the oscillations of the balloon.

Having finished his inspection, the doctor put his notes in order. He made a most successful sketch of the surrounding country, with the immense prairie as far as the eye could reach, the forest, and the balloon standing motionless over the body of the enormous elephant.

At the end of the two hours Kennedy returned with a string of partridges and a haunch of venison cut from the oryx—a sort of gemsbok, the most agile species of ante-

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lopes. Joe took upon himself to prepare this addition to the repast.

"Dinner is ready!" he soon cried, in his cheery voice. And the three travelers had only to seat themselves upon the verdant meadow. The feet and trunk of the elephant were pronounced exquisite. They drank to "Old England," as usual, and some delicious havanas perfumed the air of this beautiful region for the first time.

Kennedy ate, drank, and talked enough for four. He was intoxicated with the surroundings. He seriously proposed to the doctor to remain in that forest, and to construct a leafy cabin, and begin a sort of African Robinson Crusoe life. This proposition was not otherwise followed up, although Joe promised himself to take the part of "Friday."

The country appeared so quiet, so deserted, that the Doctor determined to pass the night on the ground. Joe made a circle of fire, an indispensable barricade against wild beasts. Hyenas, cougars, and jackals, attracted by the scent of the elephant's carcass, came prowling around. Kennedy occasionally sent a shot after the most pressing of these visitors, but the night passed without any unpleasant incident.

CHAPTER XVIII

A NIGHT ON AN ISLAND

NEXT morning, at five o'clock, they prepared to depart. Joe, with the ax which he had fortunately recovered, cut off the elephant's tusks. The "Victoria," restored to liberty, carried our travelers to the northeast at a speed of eighteen miles an hour.

The doctor had carefully ascertained his position by the altitude of the stars during the night. He made it 2° 4′ latitude below the equator, or say 160 geographical miles distant from it. They now passed over several villages without noticing the cries their appearance provoked. He took notes of the form of the locality with rapid sketches. He crossed over the slopes of the Rubemhé, almost as steep as the summits of the Ousagara, and later on reached the Tenga, the first spurs of the Karagwah chain, which, according to him, are the commencement of

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the Mountains of the Moon. Now the old legend, which states that these hills are the cradle of the Nile, appears to be not far from the truth, inasmuch as they border upon Lake Ukéréoné, the supposed reservoir for the waters of the big river.

From Kafuero, the central market of the native merchants, he perceived at length on the horizon the long-sought lake which Captain Speke got a glimpse of on the 3rd of August, 1858.

Samuel Ferguson was moved. He had almost arrived at one of the principal points of his expedition, and, telescope in hand, he did not lose a corner of this mysterious country which his gaze thus drank in.

Beneath him the ground appeared generally exhausted; there was scarcely a hollow cultivated; the plain, dotted here and there with mounds of medium elevation, became level as it approached the lake; fields of barley took the place of rice. There was the plantain, from which the wine of the country is made, and the "mwani," a wild plant that yields coffee. A collection of fifty circular huts, covered with a flowery thatch, constituted the capital of Karagwah. They could easily distinguish the astonished faces of a race apparently good-looking and of a yellowish-brown color. Women of a most incredible corpulence were working in the fields, and the doctor astonished his companions by informing them that this stoutness, which is highly appreciated, is obtained by an obligatory diet of curdled milk.

At mid-day the "Victoria" was in 1° 45′ South latitude; in an hour the wind carried it over the lake. Captain Speke called this Lake "Victoria" Nyanza. In this place it measures ninety miles wide. At its southern extremity the captain found a group of islands which he designated the Archipelago of Bengal. He pushed his researches as far as Muanza on the eastern side, where he was well received by the sultan. He made a triangulation of this part of the lake; but he could not procure a boat either to cross it or to visit the great island of Ukéréoné. This very populous island is governed by three sultans, and only forms a peninsula at low water.

The "Victoria" approached the lake more towards the north to the doctor's great disappointment, who wanted to

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note the lower bends. The banks bristled with thorny thickets and tangled brushwood, and were entirely hidden under a cloud of millions of mosquitoes of a clear brown color; the country then appeared to be uninhabitable and uninhabited. They could see troops of hippopotami wallowing amidst the reeds, whence they plunged beneath the pellucid water of the lake.

The lake, seen from above, extended to such a distance towards the west as almost to appear a sea. The distance between the opposite sides of the lake is too great for the establishment of communications; besides, the storms are frequent and fierce, for the winds rage terribly in that elevated and open basin.

The doctor had some difficulty to manage the balloon—he was afraid of being carried away towards the sea; but fortunately a current bore him directly to the north, and at 6 P. M. the "Victoria" pulled up at a small desolate island in 0° 30′ lat. and 32° 52′ long., about twenty miles from the border of the lake.

The travelers were enabled to make the balloon fast to a tree, and the wind having dropped as evening came on, they remained quietly at anchor. They did not venture to get down on the ground, for here, as upon the banks of the Nyanza, legions of mosquitoes covered the earth in a thick cloud. Joe returned from the tree even covered with bites, but he did not trouble himself about them, as he fancied that such conduct was only "the nature of the animal."

Nevertheless, the doctor, somewhat less of an optimist, let out the rope to its furthest extent with the view to escape these pestilent insects, which were hovering about with a never-resting "trumpeting."

The doctor reckoned that the height of the lake above the level of the sea was as determined by Captain Speke; that is to say, 3,750 feet.

"So we are on an island!" cried Joe, scratching himself as if he would dislocate his wrists.

"We shall have quickly made the tour of it," replied the Scot, "and, except these blessed insects, I don't think there is a living thing on it."

"The islands, with which the lake is studded," replied Doctor Ferguson, "are only, in fact, the summits of sub-

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merged hills, but we are fortunate in finding shelter here, for the shores of the lake are inhabited by ferocious tribes. So go to sleep in peace, as the sky gives assurance of a quiet night."

"Are you not going to do the same, Samuel?"

"No, I cannot close my eyes. My thoughts are such as to banish sleep. To-morrow, my friends, if the wind be favorable, we shall proceed due north, and perhaps discover the sources of the Nile—the impenetrable secret! So near to the sources of the Great River I cannot sleep."

Kennedy and Joe, whose scientific cogitations did not trouble them to so great an extent, did not hesitate to sleep soundly under the doctor's guardianship.

On Wednesday, April 23rd, the "Victoria" set out at four o'clock under a gray sky. The darkness seemed loath to leave the waters of the lake, which was enveloped in a thick mist. Soon, however, a strong breeze dispersed all this fog. The "Victoria" was for some minutes balanced, in more senses than one, and at last made up its mind and set off directly towards the north.

Doctor Ferguson clapped his hands joyously.

"We are now in the right track," he cried; "to-day or never we shall see the Nile. My friends, now we are crossing the equator—we are entering our own hemisphere."

"Oh!" cried Joe. "Do you think, sir, that the equator does pass by here?"

"At this very spot, my brave lad!"

"Well, 'saving your presence,' sir, it seems to me advisable to 'wet' it without further loss of time."

"Go and fetch the grog," said the doctor, laughing; "you have a way of understanding cosmography which is not to be despised."

And that was how they celebrated the "crossing of the line" in the "Victoria."

The balloon continued to glide rapidly along. In the west they could perceive the low and somewhat undulating coast; at the end, the more elevated plains of Uganda and Usoga. The wind now blew with great force.

The waters of the Nyanza rose and broke in billows, like those of the ocean. From the observation of certain waves, which kept breaking a long time after the wind lulled, the doctor reckoned that the lake was of great depth. Only one

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or two large boats were descried during the rapid transit.

"This lake," said the doctor, "is evidently, from its elevated position, the natural reservoir of the rivers in the eastern parts of Africa. Heaven gives it again in rain what it absorbs in vapors from its effluents. It appears to me certain that the Nile ought to have its source here."

"We shall soon see," said Kennedy.

Towards nine o'clock the coast towards the west was neared: it appeared desert and wooded. The wind backed a little to the east, and they could get a glimpse of the other side of the lake. It trended so as to terminate in a very obtuse angle, about 2° 40′ North latitude. High mountains stood up with arid peaks at this end of the Nyanza, but between them a deep and winding gorge gave vent to a rippling stream.

All the while he was regulating the balloon, Doctor Ferguson kept examining the country with an anxious gaze.

"There it is, my friends, there it is!" he cried; "the accounts of the Arabs were correct. They spoke of a river by which the Lake Ukéréoné discharged itself towards the north, and this river exists. We will descend with it, and it flows with a rapidity equal to ours. And this drop of water which passes under our feet is surely on its way to mingle with the Mediterranean waves. It is the Nile!"

"It is the Nile," replied Kennedy, who had yielded to the enthusiasm of Samuel Ferguson.

"Long live the Nile!" cried Joe, who cried long live anything when he was pleased.

The enormous rocks here and there hindered the course of this mysterious river. The water boiled up, forming rapids and cataracts, which confirmed the doctor in his suppositions. These surrounding mountains gave rise to numerous torrents foaming in their fall, which could be counted by hundreds. They could see little scattered jets of water springing from the earth, crossing each other, mingling together, and vying in speed, and all hastening to this newborn stream, which became a river after it had absorbed them all.

"That is really the Nile," replied the doctor, now convinced. "The origin of the name has puzzled the learned as much as the source of its waters. They have declared it comes from the Greek, from the Coptic, from the Sanscrit.

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'After all it is not much matter, since they could not disclose the secret of its source."

"But," said the Scot, "how are we to be assured of the identity of this river with that which travelers from the north have discovered?"

"We shall have certain irresistible and infallible proofs," replied Ferguson, "if the wind only favor us for another hour."

The mountains fell back, giving place to numerous villages, to fields cultivated with the oil plant, dourrah, and sugar-canes. The tribes of these countries appeared excited and hostile. They approached nearer to anger than adoration; they looked upon the travelers as strangers, and not as gods. It seemed to them that in coming to the sources of the Nile they had come to steal something. The "Victoria" was obliged to keep out of musket range.

"To land here would be difficult," said the Scotchman.

"Well," said Joe, "so much the worse for the natives—we shall deprive them of the benefit of our conversation."

"I must descend, nevertheless," replied Doctor Ferguson, "if only for a quarter of an hour. Otherwise I shall not be able to verify the results of our exploration."

"Is that really indispensable, Samuel?"

"It is, and we shall descend without the firing of a gun."

"That is my business," replied Kennedy, patting his carbine.

"Whenever you choose, sir," said Joe, preparing himself for fighting.

"This will not be the first time," said the doctor, "that one has worked for science arms in hand; a similar thing happened to a French professor in the Spanish mountains when he was measuring the terrestrial meridian."

"You be quiet, Samuel, and trust to your bodyguard."

"Are we at the place now, sir?" asked Joe.

"Not yet. Indeed we must ascend in order to learn the 'lie of the land' a little."

The hydrogen was expanded, and in less than ten minutes the "Victoria" was floating at a height of 2,500 feet.

They could distinguish from that elevation an inextricable network of streams, which the river received. It flowed more from the west between the hills, in the midst of a fertile country.

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"We are not ninety miles from Gondokoro," said the doctor, referring to the map, "and scarcely five miles from the point reached by the discoverers from the north. Let us now approach the earth, but cautiously."

The "Victoria" descended more than 2,000 feet.

"Now, my friends, be ready for anything."

"We are ready," replied Dick and Joe.

"Good," said the doctor.

The "Victoria" sailed over the bed of the river at a height of scarcely 100 feet. The Nile measured fifty fathoms at this spot; and the inhabitants were tremendously excited in the villages along the banks. At the second degree the river formed a cascade about ten feet high, and was consequently impassable for boats.

"There is the very waterfall spoken of by M. Debono!" cried the doctor.

The bed of the river became extended and dotted with numerous islands, which Ferguson scanned narrowly. He seemed to be seeking a landmark which he had not hitherto perceived.

Some negroes were advancing in a boat beneath the balloon. Kennedy saluted them with a shot, which, without touching them, sent them back to the bank pretty quickly.

"Pleasant voyage!" shouted Joe; "in their place I would not take the chance of returning. I should have a wholesome fear of a monster who could hurl thunder at me at his will."

But now the doctor suddenly seized his telescope and directed it towards an island situated in the center of the river.

"Four trees!" he cried. "Do you see them down there? In fact four solitary trees were observable at the extremity of the island.

"'Tis the isle of Benga; it is indeed!" he shouted.

"Well, what then?" asked Dick.

"There we must descend, please goodness."

"But it appears to be inhabited, Mr. Samuel!"

"Joe is right; if I do not mistake, there are about twenty natives assembled there."

"We must put them to flight, that will not be a difficult matter," said Ferguson.

"All right!" said Dick.

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The sun was in the zenith. The "Victoria" approached the island.

The negroes, who appeared to be of the Makado tribe, uttered discordant cries. One of them waved his bark head-covering in the air. Kennedy took aim, fired, and the hat was knocked to pieces. There was a general stampede. The natives precipitated themselves into the river, and swam across. From both banks there came a hail of bullets and a shower of arrows, but without any hurt to the balloon, whose grapnel had become fastened in a fissure of a rock. Joe let himself slide down to the ground.

"The ladder, the ladder," cried the doctor. "Follow me Kennedy!"

"What are you going to do?"

"To descend. I want a witness."

"Here I am, then."

"Joe, keep guard, mind."

"All right, sir; I am responsible for everything."

"Come, Dick," said the doctor, putting his foot on the ground.

He led his companion towards a mass of rock that rose up at the extremity of the island. There, after searching for some time, hunting about amongst the brushwood till his hands were cut and bleeding, suddenly he grasped the Scot's arm.

"Look there!" said he.

"Letters!" cried Kennedy.

In fact, two letters engraven in the rock appeared in all their pristine sharpness of outline. They distinctly read:

A. D.

"A. D.," said the doctor. "Andrea Debono! The initials of that very traveler who mounted to the highest point of the course of the Nile."

"That is unimpeachable evidence, friend Samuel."

"Are you now convinced?"

"It is the Nile; we can have no doubt about it."

The doctor took a "last fond look" at the precious initials, of which he made a tracing.

"Now," said he, "for the balloon!"

"Quick, then, for there are some natives preparing to cross the river."

"That does not matter much to us now. If the breeze

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will only hold to us a few hours we shall reach Gondokoro and shake hands with our own countrymen."

Ten minutes afterwards the "Victoria" rose majestically, and Dr. Ferguson, as a signal of success, unfurled the Royal Standard of England as they sailed along.

CHAPTER XIX

THE NILE

"In what direction are we going?" asked Kennedy, seeing his companion looking at the compass.

"Nor-nor-west," was the reply.

"The devil! That is not north, is it?"

"No, Dick. And I think we shall have some difficulty to reach Gondokoro. I am sorry for it, but, at any rate, we have united the exploration of the east to those of the north, so we must not complain."

The "Victoria" now edged away from the Nile.

"A last look," said the doctor, "at this insurmountable latitude, which the most intrepid travelers have never been able to pass. There are surely those intractable tribes mentioned by Pethwick, Arnaud, Miani, and the young explorer Lejean, to whom we are indebted for the best works upon the Upper Nile."

"So," said Kennedy, "our discoveries are in accord with the forecastings of science."

"Entirely. The sources of the White River of the Bahr-el-Abiad are immersed in a great lake like a sea. It takes its rise there. There poetry lost it. They loved to fancy that this king of rivers had a heavenly origin; the ancients called it 'ocean' and it was not a difficult thing to believe that it descended directly from the sun. But it is necessary to refute or to accept, from time to time, that which science has laid down. There will not be learned men for ever, perhaps; but there will always be poets!"

"There are more cataracts," said Joe.

"Those are the cataracts of Makedo in the 3rd degree of latitude. Nothing is more certain. Fancy our being able thus to follow the course of the Nile for hours!"

"And farther down," said the Scot, "I can perceive the summit of a mountain."

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"That is Mount Logwek, the 'Shaking Mountain' of the Arabs. All this part has been visited by M. Debono, who explored it under the name of Latif Effendi. The neighboring tribes are hostile to each other and keep up a war of extermination. You can thus estimate without difficulty the extent of the perils he had to overcome."

The breeze now carried the "Victoria" towards the north-east. In order to clear Mount Logwek it was necessary to seek a more inclined current.

"My friends," said the doctor to his companions, "we are now about to commence our journey across Africa in real earnest. So far we have only been following the footsteps of our predecessors. We are now about to penetrate into the 'unknown.' Your courage will not fail?"

"Never!" cried Dick and Joe in one breath.

"Let us go on then, and may Heaven guide us on our way!"

At ten o'clock at night, passing over ravines, forests, and villages, the travelers reached the side of the "Shaking Mountain," beside whose slopes they ascended.

In this memorable journey of the 23rd April, during a sail of fifteen hours, they had, under the influence of a strong wind, accomplished a distance of 315 miles.

But this latter part of the journey had left a trace of sadness behind it. Complete silence reigned in the car. Was Doctor Ferguson absorbed in the contemplation of his discoveries? Were his companions thinking of this expedition into the unknown regions? There was all that, without doubt, mingled with very vivid recollections of England and absent friends. Joe was the only one to assume a carelessly philosophic manner, feeling it only natural that his native land was no longer there when he had quitted it; but he respected the silence of the doctor and Kennedy.

The "Victoria" now anchored, "broadside on," to the "Shaking Mountain"; they were enabled to make a substantial meal, and all slept under the successive guard of the other alternately.

Next day, more cheerful thoughts arrived with the working hours. They had a lovely day, and the wind blew in the proper direction. A breakfast, much enlivened by Joe, sufficed to put them into better spirits.

The country passed over just then was very extensive.

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It stretched from the Mountains of the Moon to those of Darfour, a space as broad as the width of Europe.

"We shall undoubtedly cross what is supposed to be the kingdom of Usoga," said the doctor. "Some geographers have pretended that, in the center of Africa exists a vast depression, an immense central lake. We shall see if this hypothesis has any foundation in fact."

"But how have they arrived at such a conclusion?"

"From the reports of the Arabs, these people are great story-tellers; too much so, perhaps. Some travelers, arriving from Kazeh, or the Great Lakes, have seen slaves brought from the central districts. They have questioned these people respecting their country, they have put together a heap of these various statements, and have thence made their deduction. At the bottom of all this there is a substratum of truth, and you have seen that they did not mistake in the origin of the Nile so much after all."

"Nothing could be more correct," said Kennedy.

"It is from these documents that trial-maps have been attempted. So I am about to follow up my route upon one of these, and to rectify it when necessary."

"Is all this region inhabited?" asked Joe.

"Certainly, but thinly."

"I suspect so."

"These scattered tribes are comprised under the general denomination of Nyam-Nyam, and this name is only another name for 'onomatopy'; it reproduces the sound of mastication."

"Perfectly," replied Joe. "Nyam-Nyam."

"My good Joe, if you were the original cause of this 'onomatopy,' you would not be so perfect?"

"What do you mean?"

"Merely that these people are cannibals!"

"Is that certain?"

"Quite certain People also pretended that these tribes had tails, but it was soon discovered that the tails were those of the animals in whose skins they were clothed."

"So much the worse. A tail is a very useful appendage to keep off the mosquitoes," said Joe.

"Possibly, but we must relegate that tale to the ranks of fable, just like the story told by Brun-Rollet of certain tribes having dogs' heads."

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"Dogs' heads! Most convenient for barking, and for cannibals."

"What has been proved is unfortunately this, that the people are most savage, and they are very desirous of human flesh, which they seek for with avidity.'"

"All I ask is," said Joe, "that they won't seek me individually so anxiously."

"I say!" cried Dick.

"I mean it this way, Mr. Dick. If ever I am to be eaten in a moment of scarcity, I hope that it will be for your advantage, and for my master's. But to sustain those blackamoors, never! I should die of shame!"

"Well, then my brave Joe, now that is understood, we may count upon you at a pinch," said Kennedy.

"At your service, gentlemen," said Joe.

"Joe talks like that," said the doctor, "so that we may take great care of him, and feed him up."

"Very likely," replied Joe. "Man is a terribly selfish animal."

During the afternoon the sky was hidden by a thick mist, which made the earth damp. The fog scarcely allowed objects to be distinguished on the ground, and, fearful of striking against some invisible peak, the doctor ascended for about five hours. The night passed without accident, but it was necessary to be doubly vigilant in the profound darkness.

The trade-wind blew with extreme violence during the early part of the following day. The wind roared in the lower part of the balloon, and shook the appendages by which the tubes of dilatation penetrated with great force. They were compelled to fasten them with ropes, in which work Joe acquitted himself very skillfully.

They ascertained, at the same time, that the opening at the top of the balloon remained hermetically sealed. "This is of the utmost importance to us," said Doctor Ferguson. "We obviate the escape of the precious gas; besides, we leave nothing round us of an inflammable nature by which, if a light were applied, we should be stopped altogether."

"That would be a very unpleasant incident of our journey," said Joe.

"Should we be precipitated to the ground?" asked Dick.

"No, not precipitated. The gas would burn quietly, and we should descend by degrees. A similar accident happened

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to the French aëronaut, Madame Blanchard. She set fire to the balloon while setting off fireworks, but she did not fall; and she would not have lost her life had her car not been hurled against a chimney, and she herself thrown to the ground."

"Let us trust that no such accident will happen to us," said Dick. "So far our journey has not appeared to me dangerous, and I see no reason why we should not reach our destination."

"Nor do I, my dear Dick. Accidents, moreover, have always been caused either by imprudence on the part of the aëronauts, or by the badly-constructed apparatus they make use of. So, out of many thousands of aërial ascents, we can reckon only about twenty fatal accidents. Generally it is the landings or the departures which offer most danger. So, in like case, we ought not to neglect any precautions."

"It is breakfast time," said Joe; "we must content ourselves with preserved meat and coffee until Mr. Kennedy has the opportunity to treat us to a haunch of venison."

CHAPTER XX

FIGHT OF THE TRIBES

THE wind was becoming violent and squally. The "Victoria" made "tacks" in the air. Sometimes tossed to the north, sometimes to the south, it could not meet with any steady slant of wind.

"We are going very fast without advancing much," said Kennedy, as he remarked the frequent oscillations of the magnetic needle.

"The 'Victoria' is flying at a speed of nearly thirty leagues an hour," said Ferguson. "Lean over and see how quickly the country disappears from beneath us. Mind, this forest appears as if it were about to precipitate itself against us!"

"The forest is already an open space," said Kennedy.

"And the open space is now a village," added Joe, a few seconds later. "Look at the astonished faces of the niggers!"

"No wonder," replied the doctor. "The French peasants, when they first saw balloons, ran away, taking

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them for monstrous air-sprites; so we must not be surprised at the natives of the Soudan looking astonished."

"I declare," said Joe, as the "Victoria" just skimmed over a village about 100 feet above it. "I have a great mind to shy an empty bottle at them if you have no objection, sir. If it arrive unbroken they will worship it, if it smash they will make 'charms' of the pieces."

And as he spoke he threw a bottle over; it of course was broken to fragments, while the natives ran into their huts uttering loud cries.

A little farther on Kennedy cried:

"Look at that extraordinary tree—it appears to be of one species at the top and another lower down!"

"Yes," said Joe; "this is apparently a country where trees grow one on top of the other!"

"It is only the trunk of a fig-tree," replied the doctor, "upon which a little mold has fallen. One fine day the wind happened to bring a seed of the palm here, and the palm tree has grown up accordingly."

"A capital plan," said Joe, "and one I shall introduce into England. It would answer capitally in the London parks, not to mention that it would be a way of multiplying fruit trees; one might have gardens in the air, which would be quite to the taste of small proprietors."

At this moment they were obliged to elevate the "Victoria" to about 300 feet, so as to avoid a forest of high trees—very ancient banyans.

"What magnificent trees!" cried Kennedy; "I know nothing finer than these old forests. Look, Samuel!"

"The height of these banyans is truly marvelous, my dear Dick; yet they are not to be compared with the American forests."

"What! are there bigger trees in America?"

"Certainly! amongst those called 'mammoth trees.' Thus in California there is a cedar 450 feet high, which is higher than the tower of the Houses of Parliament or even than the great Pyramid of Egypt. The trunk is 120 feet round at the base, and the concentric rings of the tree declare it to be more than 4,000 years old!"

"Well, sir," said Joe, "that is not very wonderful. When you have lived 4,000 years it is only natural that you should be very big."

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During the above conversation the forest had given place to a large collection of huts, disposed in a circle round a clear space. In the center rose an extraordinary tree. Joe cried out when he saw it: "Well, if that tree has produced such flowers as those for 4,000 years, I shall not pay it any compliment."

It was a gigantic sycamore, whose trunk was completely concealed by a heap of human bones. The "flowers" of which Joe spoke were human heads lately cut off, and suspended by daggers fixed in the bark.

"The 'war-tree' of the cannibals," said the doctor. "The Indians take the scalp, the Africans the entire head."

"A matter of taste," said Joe.

But the village of the bleeding heads was fast disappearing on the horizon; yet another farther on offered a not less horrible spectacle. Half-eaten human bodies, crumbling skeletons, human remains, were scattered about, and were left to be devoured by the hyenas and jackals.

"Those are doubtless the bodies of criminals, and, as is the practice in Abyssinia, they are exposed to the attacks of wild beasts, who devour them at their leisure, having first killed them with teeth and claws."

"It is not much more cruel than hanging," said the Scot, "it is more horrible, that's all."

"In the south of Africa," replied the doctor, "they merely shut the offender up in his own hut with the wild beasts; perhaps his family is also included. The hut is then set on fire and the occupants are all roasted together. I *do* call that cruelty, but I agree with Kennedy that if hanging be less cruel it is equally barbarous."

Joe, with the excellent sight which served him so well now, cried that he could perceive some birds of prey appearing above the horizon.

"They are eagles," replied Kennedy, after having examined them with his telescope; "splendid birds!—their flight is as rapid as our own."

"Heaven preserve us from their attacks!" said the doctor; "they are more to be dreaded than the most ferocious beasts or the most savage tribes."

"Bah!" replied Dick, "we shall drive them off with our rifles."

"I should very much prefer not to be obliged to resort

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to your skill, my dear Dick. The taffeta could not resist their beaks. Fortunately they appear to be more frightened than attracted by our balloon."

"Yes, but I have got an idea," said Joe, "for ideas are tumbling in by dozens to-day. If we were to procure a team of eagles, we might harness them to the car, and they would draw us through the air."

"The proposal is seriously made," said the doctor; "but I very much question its practicability with such very restive animals."

"We might train them," replied Joe; "instead of bits we could guide them with blinkers, which would cover their eyes completely. Unloose one eye, they would go to the right or left as the case might be; blind them again, and they would stop."

"You must allow me, my good Joe, to prefer a favorable wind to your harnessed eagles. It costs less to keep—that is certain, at any rate."

"Oh, by all means, sir; but I will keep my idea all the same."

It was mid-day. For some time the "Victoria" had been going along steadily, not flying as it lately had been. Suddenly cries and whistling sounds reached the ears of the travelers; they leaned over and perceived in the open plain a sight not easily to be forgotten. Two tribes were engaged in deadly combat and exchanging clouds of arrows. The combatants were so deeply engaged that they did not perceive the "Victoria." They numbered about 300, and were mingled in an inextricable *mêlée;* the greater part of them were reddened with the blood in which they appeared literally steeped. It was a horrible sight. At the appearance of the balloon there was a pause, the shouts were redoubled, some arrows were launched at the car, and one of them came near enough for Joe to catch it.

"We must get out of reach," said the doctor. "No imprudence, we cannot allow that."

The battle continued. So soon as an enemy "bit the dust," his opponent hastened to decapitate him. The women mixed in this rout, collected the bleeding heads, and piled them up at either extremity of the battle-field, and often fought among themselves for possession of these hideous trophies.

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"Horrible scene," said Kennedy, with profound disgust.

"Wretched creatures," cried Joe. "They only want a uniform now to be like all other soldiers."

"I have a great mind to interfere in the battle," cried Kennedy, brandishing a carbine.

"Not so," replied the doctor; "nothing of the sort. Let us mind our own business. How do you know who is right or wrong, that you should play the part of Providence? Let us get farther away from this repulsive scene. If great generals could only look down as we do upon their fields of battle, they would end, perhaps, in losing their taste for blood and conquest."

The chief of one of the bands of savages was remarkable for his tall form and Herculean strength. With one hand he plunged his lance into the thick masses of his enemies, and with the other he cleared the way with tremendous blows of his hatchet. Presently he cast his gory lance from him, and cast himself upon a wounded man, whose arm he swept off with a blow of his hatchet. He then seized the arm and began to devour it on the spot.

"Ugh!" cried Kennedy, "the brute! I can't stand any more." And the warrior, hit by a bullet in the forehead, fell dead on his back.

At his fall, a profound terror seized his band. This supernatural death served to reanimate the ardor of their adversaries, and in a moment the battle-field was abandoned by half the combatants.

"Let us seek a higher current to take us along," said the doctor, "I am sick of this."

But they could not get away so quickly, but that they could perceive the victorious tribe seize upon the dead and wounded, and fight over the still warm flesh, and devour it eagerly. "Pugh," said Joe, "that is sickening."

The "Victoria" rose. The shouts of the frenzied crowd followed them for some moments, but at length, impelled towards the south, they escaped from this scene of carnage and cannibalism.

The country appeared undulating with several water-courses, which ran towards the east, and fell doubtless into the affluents of the lake Nu, or of the River of Gazelles, respecting which M. Lejean has given some curious details. When night fell the "Victoria" dropped anchor in

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27° E. longitude, and 4° 20′ N. latitude, after a journey of 150 miles.

CHAPTER XXI
A NIGHT ATTACK

THE night was very dark. The doctor had not been able to recognize the country. He made fast to a tall tree, of which he could scarcely distinguish the confused mass in the gloom. According to arrangement, he took the nine o'clock watch, and at midnight Dick came to relieve him.

"Watch carefully, Dick, please; very carefully."

"Anything new, then?"

"No; I believe I have heard some strange noises below us, and I do not know quite where the wind has carried us. A little extra prudence, then, cannot do any harm."

"You have heard cries of wild beasts?"

"No, it appeared to me something quite different. However, at the least alarm do not fail to wake us."

"All right," replied Dick.

After listening attentively once more, and hearing nothing, the doctor retired, and slept soundly.

The sky was covered with thick clouds, but not a breath of wind was stirring. The "Victoria," held by a single grapnel, felt no movement.

Kennedy leaned upon the car so as to watch the action of the blow-pipe, and began to think of this Erebus-like gloom. He scanned the horizon, and as it happens to restless or preoccupied persons, he fancied he could perceive at times a faint glimmering of light. At one moment he actually believed he saw it 200 paces distant, but it was only a flash, after which he could perceive nothing. It was doubtless one of those luminous sensations which the eye produces in the midst of profound darkness.

Kennedy was satisfied, and resumed his contemplative mood, when a sharp whistle broke the silence. Was it the cry of an animal or of a bird of night? Or did it emanate from human lips?

Kennedy, recognizing all the gravity of the situation, was about to rouse his companions, but he considered that in any case, whether man or beast, it was out of range.

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He looked to his arms, however, and, with the night-glass, resumed his scrutiny into the darkness.

He soon fancied that he could distinguish below him shadowy forms, which glided towards the tree. By a ray of moonlight, which glinted like a lightning flash between two clouds, he perceived distinctly a group of people moving about in the gloom.

The adventure with the apes came to his mind; he laid his hand on the doctor's shoulder. Ferguson woke immediately.

"Silence!" whispered Kennedy.

"Is anything the matter?"

"Yes, wake Joe."

So soon as Joe was awake, the Scot related what he had seen.

"Those cursed apes again," said Joe.

"Possibly! but we must take our precautions. Joe and I will descend into the tree by the ladder," said Kennedy.

"And in the meantime," said the doctor, "I will take steps to ensure a rapid retreat upwards."

"Agreed!"

"Let us get down," said Joe.

"Do not resort to firearms except in the last necessity," said the doctor. "It is no use to reveal our whereabouts in these parts."

Dick and Joe signed assent and glided noiselessly into the tree. They took their position upon the fork of two large branches which the grapnel had caught.

For some minutes they listened mute and motionless in the tree. At a certain crackling of the bark Joe seized the Scot's hand.

"Don't you hear something?"

"Yes; it is approaching."

"If it be a serpent? The hissing you heard——"

"No, it is something human."

"I prefer savages to serpents," said Joe. "Those reptiles are most repugnant to me."

"The noise is increasing," said Kennedy some moments afterwards.

"Yes, they are ascending—creeping up."

"Do you watch this side; I will look out on the other."

"All right, sir."

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They found themselves isolated upon the main branch, growing right in the middle of the miniature forest, which a "baobab" tree makes. The obscurity, increased by the thickness of the foliage, was profound; nevertheless Joe, stooping to Kennedy's ear, and pointing to the lower portion of the tree, said: "Niggers!"

Some words in a low voice then reached even to the ears of the travelers. Joe shouldered his rifle.

"Wait a bit," said Kennedy.

The savages had actually scaled the "baobab." They rushed along it on every side, creeping along the branches like snakes—approaching slowly but surely; but they betrayed their presence by the smell of the horrible grease with which their bodies were smeared.

Soon two heads presented themselves to our travelers' gaze on a level with the very branch which they occupied.

"Attention!" cried Dick. "Fire!"

The double discharge echoed like thunder, and arose amid cries of distress. In a moment all the crowd had disappeared.

But in the midst of the shoutings a most extraordinary cry arose. It was incredible—impossible! A human voice, and speaking French!

"Help, help!" it cried.

Kennedy and Joe were stupefied. They regained the car with all speed.

"You heard it?" asked the doctor.

"Most decidedly a supernatural cry—'Help! help!'"

"'Tis a Frenchman in the hands of the savages!" said the doctor.

"A traveler!"

"A missionary, very likely!"

"The unhappy man!" cried Kennedy. "They are about to kill him—to make him suffer martyrdom!" The doctor endeavored in vain to hide his emotion.

"There can be no doubt," said he, "some unhappy Frenchman has fallen into the hands of the savages. But we will not leave this spot till we have made every effort to rescue him. The sound of our guns he looked upon as inspired succor—a providential intervention. We will not render this last hope false. Is this your opinion?"

"It is, Samuel, and we are ready to obey you."

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"Let us then arrange our plans, and so soon as daylight comes we will endeavor to release him."

"But how shall we drive away those horrible negroes?"

"It seems to me," said the doctor, "that after the way in which they dispersed, they were not acquainted with firearms. We must then profit by their fright; but it will be necessary to wait for daylight, and we will form our plan of rescue according to the circumstances."

"This unhappy man cannot be very far distant," said Joe. "For——"

"Help, help!" cried the voice, but this time in weaker accents.

"The barbarians!" cried Joe angrily. "Suppose they kill him to-night?"

"Yes, Samuel!" said Kennedy. "If they murder him to-night?"

"That is not likely, my friends. These savage tribes kill their prisoners in open day: the sun is necessary for them."

"Suppose I were to take advantage of the darkness," said the Scot, "to approach this poor victim?"

"I will go with you, Mr. Dick."

"Stop, stop, my friends. This suggestion does equal honor to your courage and your feelings; but you will put everything in jeopardy, and will only endanger the man we want to save."

"How so?" asked Kennedy. "The savages are frightened and dispersed. They will not return."

"Dick, obey me, I beg of you. I ask it for the common safety. If by any chance you were discovered, everything would be lost."

"But this poor wretch who is waiting and hoping all this time. No one answers him, no one comes to his assistance. He will think his senses have deceived him; that he has heard nothing."

"He can be reassured," said the doctor.

And standing up in the darkness and putting his hands to his mouth, the doctor called out to the stranger, in French:

"Whoever you are, be confident. Three friends watch over you."

A terrible uproar was the reply, which doubtless drowned the prisoner's answer.

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"They are about to murder him," cried Kennedy. "Our interference has only served to hasten the hour of his death. We must act."

"But how, Dick? What can you do in this darkness?"

"Oh! if it were only day!" cried Joe.

"Well, if it *were* day?" said the doctor, in a peculiar tone.

"Nothing easier then," said Kennedy. "I would descend and disperse this rabble with a few shots."

"And you, Joe?" asked the doctor.

"I, sir, would act more prudently, in making known to the prisoner that he should escape in the proper direction."

"And how would you convey this advice?"

"By means of this arrow, which I caught flying, and to which I would fasten a note; or by simply calling to him in a loud voice. The negroes would not understand his language."

"Your plans are impracticable, my friends; the greatest difficulty would be for this unfortunate man to save himself, even admitting that he could escape the vigilance of his executioners. As for you, my dear Dick, with much courage and by profiting by the fright excited by our firearms, your plan might perhaps succeed; but if it failed you would be lost, and we should have two persons to save instead of one. No, we must have all the chances on our side, and act otherwise."

"Very well, but act at once," replied Kennedy.

"Perhaps," replied Samuel, dwelling on the word.

"Are you not capable of dispelling this darkness, sir?"

"Who knows, Joe?"

"Ah, if you could do a thing like that, I should say you are the cleverest man in the world."

The doctor remained silent for some minutes in deep thought. His companions contemplated him with some emotion. They were over-excited by this extraordinary incident. Ferguson soon spoke.

"This is my plan," he said. "We have still 200 lbs. of ballast, as the bags in which we brought it have remained untouched. I take for granted that this prisoner, a man evidently worn-out by hardships, weighs as much as one of us. There will remain, therefore, 60 lbs. to throw away in order that we may rise rapidly."

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"How do you intend to act, then?" asked Kennedy.

"This way, Dick. You admit, no doubt, that if I succeed with the prisoner and throw away a quantity of ballast equal to his weight, nothing will be changed so far as the equilibrium of the balloon is concerned; but then if I want to secure a rapid ascent to escape this tribe of negroes, I must use stronger measures than the blow-pipe; now in throwing over this weight of ballast at the right moment I am sure to rise with great rapidity."

"That is evident."

"Yes; but there is great inconvenience in it. For instance, to descend slowly, I must lose a quantity of gas proportionate to the excess of ballast I shall have thrown away. Now this gas is a very precious commodity, but we must not regret the loss where the safety of a fellow-creature is concerned."

"You are right, Samuel, we must sacrifice everything to save him."

"Well, let us be up and doing. Dispose these bags so that they may be thrown down at once.

"But the darkness——"

"Will hide our preparations, and will not be gone until they are completed. Take care to have all the arms within reach. It may be necessary to give them a volley; we have one shot in the carbine, four in the two guns, twelve in the two revolvers—seventeen in all—which can be fired in a quarter of a minute. But we may not be obliged to resort to this. Are you ready?"

"We are," replied Joe.

The bags were arranged, and the arms laid ready for action.

"Good," said the doctor. "Keep a good look-out. Joe shall have the duty of throwing the ballast over, and Dick shall take up the prisoner, but nothing may be done without my orders. Joe, go and loose the grapnel and come back as quickly as possible."

Joe let himself slide down by the rope, and reappeared in a few minutes. The "Victoria" thus freed, floated in air, scarcely moving at all."

Meantime the doctor assured himself that there was a sufficient quantity of gas in the "mixing-chest" to support the blow-pipe, if necessary, without making it obligatory to

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resort to the Buntzen "pile." He raised the two perfectly isolating conducting rods which were used to decompose the water, then searching in his traveling-bag he drew out two pieces of charcoal cut to a point, which he fastened to the end of each wire.

His two friends watched him without understanding his object, but they said nothing until the doctor had finished. He then stood upright in the center of the car and took one of the pieces of charcoal in each hand and touched one against the other. Suddenly an intense and dazzling light was produced of an insupportable brightness between the two parts of the charcoal. An immense band of electric light literally burnt through the obscurity of the night.

"Oh!" said Joe. "Sir——"

"Hold your tongue," said the doctor.

CHAPTER XXII

THE RESCUE

FERGUSON directed his electric light towards various points, and stopped at the spot whence the cries of terror were heard. His two companions regarded it fixedly.

The "baobab," above which the "Victoria" was hovering, was growing in the center of an open space. Between the oil-plant fields and the sugar-canes they distinguished fifty huts of low and conical appearance, around which a numerous tribe had congregated.

A hundred feet below the balloon a stake had been prepared. At the foot of this stake lay a human being, a young man about thirty years old, with long black hair; he was half naked, emaciated, stained with blood, and covered with wounds. His head was bent forward on his chest.

Some hairs more closely shaven on the top of the head indicated the place where the tonsure had been half effaced.

"A missionary! a priest!" cried Joe.

"Poor fellow!" said the Scot.

"We will save him, Dick," said the doctor.

The crowd of negroes perceiving the balloon, which appeared like an enormous comet with a dazzling tail, were seized with a panic, as may readily be imagined. At their cries, the prisoner raised his head. His eyes sparkled with

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a rapid feeling of hope, and, without understanding all that was going on, he extended his hands towards his would-be helpers.

"He lives, he lives!" cried Ferguson. "Heaven be praised! These savages are in a most excellent fright. We shall save him. Are you ready, friends?"

"We are quite ready, Samuel."

"Joe, slacken the blow-pipe."

The doctor's orders were obeyed. A scarcely perceptible breeze carried the "Victoria" gently over the prisoner, at the same time that it was gradually lowered by the contraction of the gas. For about ten minutes it remained floating in the midst of the waves of electric light. Ferguson darted amongst the crowd his sparkling clusters of light, which shot here and there in rapid and brilliant gleams. The tribe, under the influence of indescribable terror, disappeared gradually into their huts, and the neighborhood of the stake was deserted. The doctor had been right to count upon the fantastic appearance of the "Victoria," which darted rays as from the sun into the darkness.

The car approached the ground. But some negroes, bolder than the rest, began to comprehend that their victim would escape, and returned, yelling loudly. Kennedy seized his rifle, but the doctor ordered him not to fire.

The priest was kneeling down, not having sufficient strength to stand upright; he was not even tied to the stake, as his weakness rendered bonds useless. At the moment that the car touched the ground, the Scot leaned over, and, seizing the priest round the waist, placed him in the car. At the same moment, Joe threw overboard the 200 lbs. of ballast. The doctor expected to ascend with extreme rapidity: but, contrary to his hopes, the balloon, after rising about three or four feet from the ground, remained stationary.

"What is delaying us?" he exclaimed, in terrified accents.

Some savages now came running up and uttering fierce cries.

"Oh!" cried Joe, leaning over, "one of those cursed niggers is holding on to the balloon."

"Dick, Dick!" cried the doctor, "the water-tank!"

Dick understood, and raising one of the chests of water,

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which weighed more than 100 lbs., he threw it overboard.

The "Victoria," suddenly lightened, made a bound of 300 feet into the air, amidst the yells of the tribe, from whom the prisoner had escaped in a flash of dazzling light.

"Hurrah!" cried the doctor's companions.

Suddenly the balloon gave another bound, which carried it up to an elevation of 1,000 feet.

"What is it?" asked Kennedy, who had nearly lost his equilibrium.

"Nothing! It is only that blackguard who has let go," replied the doctor calmly.

And Joe, looking quickly over, could still perceive the savage with extended hands tumbling over and over in the air, and he soon fell crushed upon the ground. The doctor then separated the two electric wires, and the obscurity became profound. It was one o'clock in the morning.

The Frenchman, who had fainted, at length opened his eyes.

"You are saved!" said the doctor.

"Saved!" he answered in English, with a sad smile, "saved from a cruel death. My brothers, I thank you; but my days are numbered, even my hours are fast running out, and I have not long to live——"

And the missionary, utterly exhausted, relapsed into insensibility.

"He is dead!" exclaimed Dick.

"No, no," replied Ferguson, as he bent over him, "but he is very weak; let us lay him down in the tent."

They laid down gently upon the coverings the poor emaciated body, covered with scars and still bleeding wounds, and on which the iron and the fire had left a hundred saddening traces. The doctor made some lint from a handkerchief, which he placed upon the wounds, after having washed them carefully. He did all this with the practiced hand of a doctor, then taking a cordial from the medicine-chest he poured a few drops down his patient's throat.

The priest feebly touched his quivering lips, and had scarcely strength to murmur "Thank you!"

The doctor perceived that it was necessary to leave him in perfect repose, so he drew the curtains of the tent and resumed his guidance of the balloon.

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The balloon, taking into account the weight of its new guest, had been divested of nearly 180 lbs. weight. It therefore kept itself up without the assistance of the blow-pipe. At daybreak a current drove it gently towards the west-nor'west. Ferguson had been contemplating the unconscious priest for some time, when Dick inquired:

"Can we preserve the life of this companion whom Heaven has sent? Have you any hope?"

"Yes, Dick, with care and pure air."

"How the man has suffered!" said Joe, with feeling.

"He has done a much bolder thing than we have, in coming alone amongst these tribes."

"No doubt about that," replied the doctor.

During all that day the doctor would not permit the sleep of his patient to be disturbed. It was a long rest, interrupted occasionally by painful murmurings, which did not reassure Ferguson.

Towards evening the "Victoria" rested motionless in the gloom, and during that night, while Joe and Kennedy laid down by the side of the invalid, Ferguson kept watch.

The following morning they perceived that the "Victoria" had drifted very slightly towards the west. The day promised to be fair and beautiful. The invalid was able to address his friends in a stronger voice, they pulled back the curtains of the tent, and he breathed with delight the crisp morning air.

"How do you feel?" asked Ferguson.

"Rather better," replied he. "But, my friends, I have scarcely seen you but as it were in a dream. I can hardly understand what has happened. Tell me who you are, so that your names may be remembered in my last prayer."

"We are English travelers," said Samuel, "and are attempting to cross Africa in a balloon, and during our passage we have had the happiness to render you assistance."

"Science has its heroes," said the missionary.

"And religion has its martyrs," replied the Scotchman.

"You are a missionary, then?" said the doctor.

"I am a priest of the Mission of the Lazarists. Heaven sent you to me, and Heaven be praised for it. The sacrifice of my life was offered. But you come from Europe! Speak to me of Europe, and of France! I have had no news for five years!"

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"Five years alone, amongst those savages!" exclaimed Kennedy.

"There were souls to be saved," said the young priest. "Ignorant brothers, barbarians, whom religion alone is able to instruct and to civilize."

Samuel Ferguson, yielding to the desire of the missionary, talked to him for a long time of France. The priest listened eagerly, and tears gathered in his eyes. The poor young man took by turns the hands of Kennedy and Joe in his feverish grasp, the doctor prepared some cups of tea, of which he gladly partook. He had then sufficient strength to sit up a little, and smiled at seeing himself carried through such a pure atmosphere.

"You are certainly wonderful travelers," he said, "and you will succeed in your bold enterprise. You will see your parents, your friends, your country once again, you——"

The weakness of the young priest here became so great that he was obliged to lie down again. During the prostration of some hours which followed, he was like one dead under Ferguson's hands. He could not contain his emotion, he felt his patient's life was speeding. Were they then to lose so quickly he whom they had snatched from martyrdom? He dressed the patient's wounds once more, and sacrificed the greater part of the supply of water, in order to refresh the sick man's burning limbs. He bestowed the most tender and discriminating care upon his patient, who recovered little by little, and returned to consciousness, if not to life.

"Speak your native tongue," he said. "I understand it."

The doctor learnt his history in disconnected sentences.

The missionary was a poor young man from the village of Aradon, in Bretagne, in the plain of Morbihan; his first instincts led him towards an ecclesiastical career. To that life of self-denial he wished to unite a life of danger, and entered into the order of mission priests, of which St. Vincent de Paul was the glorious founder. At twenty years of age he quitted his native land for the inhospitable plains of Africa. Then, by degrees, overcoming obstacles, enduring privations, praying and marching, he advanced into the midst of the tribes which dwell by the affluents of the upper Nile. During two years his religion was scoffed at, his

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zeal despised, his kindness of heart misunderstood; he remained the prisoner of one of the most cruel people of the Nyambarra, the object of a thousand ill-treatments. But he continued to pray, and to instruct, both by example and precept. The tribe was dispersed, and left him for dead, after one of those combats which so frequently take place between neighboring tribes; instead of retracing his steps, he continued his evangelical pilgrimage. The most peaceful time he enjoyed was that when he was taken for an idiot; and having become familiarized with the dialects of the country, he continued his good work. Finally, after two more long years, he penetrated these barbarous regions, impelled by that superhuman force which comes from God alone. For one year he had dwelt with this tribe of Nyam-Nyam, called Barafia, and one of the most savage. The chief having died some days before, they attributed his sudden death to the missionary, and resolved to kill him; his punishment had already lasted forty hours, and, as the doctor had supposed, he was to have died at noon.

When he heard the report of firearms, Nature asserted herself, and he cried aloud for help; he almost believed he was dreaming when a voice came from heaven bearing him words of consolation.

"I do not regret the existence which I am about to quit," added he; "my life is with God."

"Do not abandon all hope," replied the doctor; "we are with you—we will save you from death as we have saved you from suffering."

"I do not ask so much from Heaven," replied the resigned priest; "blessed be God for having permitted me the happiness of clasping friendly hands and hearing my native tongue once more before I die."

The missionary sank back again. The day passed thus alternating between hope and fear. Kennedy was visibly affected, and Joe wiped his eyes unobserved.

The "Victoria" made but little way, and the wind appeared to be desirous of taking care of its precious freight.

Joe gave notice in the evening that he could perceive a strong light in the west. In higher latitudes it might have been thought to be an immense aurora borealis—the sky seemed on fire. The doctor examined this phenomenon attentively.

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"It is nothing but an active volcano, after all," he said.

"But the wind will carry us right over it," said Joe.

"Well, we will clear it at a safe distance."

Three hours afterwards the "Victoria" was amongst mountains; the exact position was 24° 15′ long., and 4° 42′ lat. In front a fiery crater poured molten lava and belched forth large rocks to an immense height, while streams of liquid fire ran down in cascades of dazzling beauty. It was a grand and fearful sight, for the wind, with a fixed direction, carried the balloon towards the burning mountain.

This obstacle, which they could not avoid, they must pass over. The blow-pipe was warmed to full pressure, and the "Victoria" ascended to 6,000 feet, leaving a distance of 300 fathoms between it and the volcano.

From his bed of pain the dying priest was able to watch the crater from which a thousand sheaves of fire were scintillating with a roar.

"How splendid it is!" he said, "and the power of God is infinite, even in these terrible manifestations."

This outpouring of burning lava clothed the sides of the mountain in a veritable carpet of fire. The lower part of the balloon shone brightly in the darkness, a tremendous heat reached even to the car, and Doctor Ferguson hastened to escape from this perilous position.

Towards ten o'clock in the evening the mountain was only a red spot on the horizon, and the "Victoria" peacefully continued her journey in a less elevated zone.

CHAPTER XXIII

A GOOD MAN'S DEATH

THE night was splendid. The priest continued to sleep in a prostrate condition.

"He will never wake again," said Joe. "Poor young man! scarcely thirty years old."

"He will die in your arms," said the doctor, in despair. "His already feeble breathing has grown weaker still. I can do nothing to save him."

"Those infamous rascals," cried Joe, upon whom these sudden fits of anger occasionally seized, "and to think that

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this worthy priest has found words actually to plead for, to excuse, and pardon them!"

"Heaven has sent us a lovely night, Joe; it may be his last night, perhaps. He will suffer but little longer, and he will pass away in a peaceful sleep."

The dying man pronounced some disjointed words; the doctor went to him. The invalid's breathing had become labored; he asked for air. The curtains were drawn aside and he respired with delight the pure air of the calm, clear night. The stars sent down to him their trembling light, while the moon wrapped him in the pure refulgence of her beams. "My friends," said he, in a feeble voice, "I am going! May God reward you and bring you safely home, and pay my debt of gratitude."

"Do not relinquish hope," said Kennedy; "it is only a temporary weakness. You will not die. How could anyone die this lovely summer night?"

"Death is here, I know it!" said the missionary. "Let me look it in the face. Death, the commencement of joys eternal, is only the end of earthly cares. Place me upon my knees, my friends, I beg of you."

Kennedy raised him up, and was shocked to see his helpless limbs give way beneath him.

"My God! my God!" exclaimed the dying apostle. "Have mercy upon me!" His face lighted up. Far away from that earth where he had never known happiness; in the midst of that night which wrapped him in its sweetest rays of light; on the road to that heaven towards which he raised himself in a miraculous assumption, he appeared to be entering upon another life.

His last gesture was to bless his friends of a day; and he fell back in the arms of Kennedy, whose face was bathed in tears.

"Dead!" said the doctor, bending over him. "Alas! dead!" And with one accord the three men fell upon their knees.

"To-morrow," said Ferguson, at length, "We will bury him in this soil of Africa, which he has sprinkled with his blood.

During the remainder of the night the body was watched in turn by the doctor, Kennedy, and Joe, and not a single word broke the holy silence of the time:

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Next day the wind sprang from the south, and the "Victoria" passed slowly over a vast range of mountains. Here were extinct craters, there barren ravines; not a drop of water lay in these arid crests; heaped-up masses of rock, erratic blocks of stone, and white marl-pits, all denoted the profound sterility of the district.

Towards mid-day the doctor, in order to bury the body, determined to descend to a ravine surrounded by volcanic rocks of primitive formation; the surrounding mountains acted as shelter, and permitted him to bring the car down upon the earth, for there was no tree which could be utilized as a hold for the grapnels.

But, as he had explained to Kennedy, in consequence of the loss of the ballast at the time of the rescue of the priest, he could not now descend without letting a proportionate quantity of the gas escape: he then opened the safety valve of the exterior balloon. The hydrogen escaped, and the "Victoria" descended quietly towards the ravine.

So soon as the car touched the ground the doctor closed the valve, Joe jumped out, but kept one hand upon the edge of the car, and with the other he collected a number of stones which soon equaled his own weight. He then set to work with both hands, and soon placed in the car more than 500 lbs. weight of stone, when the doctor and Kennedy were able to descend in their turn. The "Victoria" was thus balanced, and its ascensional force was not sufficient to raise her.

Moreover, it was not necessary to use a great number of these blocks of stone, for those thrown in by Joe were of a very great weight; a fact which at once directed Ferguson's attention to them. The ground was strewn with quartz and porphyritic rocks.

"Here is a curious discovery!" said the doctor to himself.

Meantime Kennedy and Joe were seeking a suitable spot for the grave. It was fearfully hot in the ravine, shut in as it was like a kind of furnace. The mid-day sun poured his rays directly upon it.

It was necessary first to get rid of the rocky fragments which encumbered the ground; then a grave was dug sufficiently deep to preserve the body from the attacks of wild beasts. Then the body of the priestly martyr was interred

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with profound respect. The earth was thrown upon the mortal remains, and the great fragments of rock were disposed above like a tombstone.

The doctor still remained motionless and lost in thought. He paid no attention to the summons of his companions, nor did he return with them to seek shelter from the noontide heat.

"What are you thinking of, Samuel?" inquired Kennedy.

"Of the curious contrasts nature presents and the extraordinary effect of chance. Do you know in what ground this man of self-denial and simplicity has been buried?"

"What do you mean, Samuel?"

"This priest who had vowed himself to poverty now rests in a gold mine!"

"A gold mine!" exclaimed Kennedy and Joe.

"Yes, a gold mine!" replied the doctor. "These stones, which you trample upon, as upon stones of no value, are of great mineral purity."

"Impossible, impossible!" repeated Joe.

"You will not have to search long amongst these fissures of the schist without finding some large nuggets," said the doctor.

Joe threw himself at once upon the scattered fragments, and Kennedy was not long in following his example.

"Steady, my brave Joe," said his master.

"Oh! sir, you speak about it very calmly."

"What? a philosopher of your stamp——"

"Ah! sir, yours is the only philosophy!"

"Let us see; reflect a little. What good will all this gold do; we cannot carry it away?"

"We cannot carry it away! Why not, for instance?"

"It is too heavy for our car. I was hesitating whether I should tell you at all, for fear of exciting your regret."

"What!" cried Joe, "abandon all this treasure— a fortune to us—our own—abandon that!"

"Take care, take care, my friend. Have you caught the gold fever? Has not yonder dead body, which we came here to bury, taught you the vanity of all earthly things?"

"That is all very true," replied Joe; "but there is the gold after all. Mr. Kennedy, will you not aid me in collecting a few of these millions?"

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"What should we do with them, my poor Joe?" said the Scot, who could not help smiling. "We did not come here to make our fortune, and we ought not to bring it back with us."

"These millions are too heavy," replied the doctor, "and not easily carried in the pocket.

"But," said Joe, driven to his last intrenchments, "why cannot we carry this mineral as ballast, instead of sand?"

"Well, I have no objection to that," said Ferguson; "but don't you feel disappointed when we have to throw some thousands of pounds overboard."

"Thousands of pounds!" repeated Joe. "Is it possible that there is so much gold?"

"Yes, my friend; this is a reservoir in which Nature has amassed her treasure for centuries. There is sufficient here to enrich whole countries—an Australia and a California united at the bottom of a desert."

"And all that will remain useless?"

"Perhaps so. In any case, listen to what I propose for your consolation."

"That will be difficult to accomplish," replied Joe, with a grieved air.

"Listen. I will take the exact bearings of this place, I will make you a present of it, and on your return to England you can share with your friends—if you think so much gold will make them happy."

"Let us go, sir; I see you are right—I give up, since I must. Let us fill the car with this precious mineral. What remains at the termination of the journey will be so much gained."

So Joe set to work with a will. He soon collected about 1,000 lbs. of quartz fragments, in which the gold was embedded as if in a vein of great thickness.

The doctor watched him with a smile; during this work he took the levels and found the bearings of the tomb of the missionary were 22° 23′ long. and 4° 55′ N. lat. Then, casting a last look at the spot where the poor Frenchman lay, he approached the balloon. He had wished to erect a modest yet substantial cross upon the tomb thus abandoned in the midst of African wilds, but not a tree was to be seen in the neighborhood.

"God will know where to find it," he muttered.

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A very serious thought now began to occupy the doctor's mind. He would have given a good deal of this gold to discover a little water. He wanted to replace what had been thrown away during the elevation of the negro; but this was impossible in these sterile plains, and this fear tormented him. Obliged to keep the blow-pipe continually at work, he began to be short of water for drinking purposes, and so made up his mind not to neglect any opportunity to replenish it.

On his return to the car he found it encumbered with the stones thrown in by the avaricious Joe, but he got in without making any remark. Kennedy took his usual place and Joe brought up the rear—not without directing a covetous glance at the treasure in the ravine.

The doctor lit the blow-pipe, the coil was warmed, the current of hydrogen was formed in a few minutes, the gas expanded, but the balloon did not stir.

Joe's face wore an expression of uneasiness, but he said nothing.

"Joe," said the doctor.

Joe, did not answer.

"Joe, do you hear me?"

Joe made a sign that he heard, but did not wish to understand.

"Will you be so good," continued Ferguson, "to throw some of that mineral over?"

"But, sir, you allowed me——"

"I allowed you to replace the ballast—no more."

"Still——"

"Do you wish us to remain in this desert forever?"

Joe cast a beseeching glance at Kennedy, but the Scot had all the appearance of a man who could not interfere.

"Well, Joe."

"Your blow-pipe isn't working yet," said Joe.

"My blow-pipe is working, as you may see, but the balloon will not rise until you have got rid of a little ballast."

Joe scratched his ear and took up a fragment of quartz, the smallest of all. He weighed it, re-weighed it, passed it from hand to hand (it was about 3 or 4 lbs. weight), and threw it over.

The "Victoria" did not stir.

"Hang it, it is not moving yet!" said Joe.

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"Not yet," said the doctor. "Go on!"

Kennedy laughed, Joe threw away about 12 lbs.

The balloon remained immovable. Joe got pale.

"My poor fellow," said Ferguson, "Dick, you, and myself weigh, I believe, about 400 lbs.; you must then get rid of a weight at lest equal to ours, since it replaces us."

"Throw away 400 lbs.?" cried Joe piteously.

"And something over, so that we may ascend. Go on; courage."

The worthy lad, heaving deep sighs, commenced to throw the ballast over. From time to time he stopped.

"We are ascending," he would say each time.

"We are not," the doctor would invariably reply.

"It moves!" he said at last.

"Go on," repeated Ferguson.

"It is ascending, I am sure!" said Joe.

"Go on still," answered Ferguson.

Then Joe, taking up the last block, desperately threw it away from the car.

The "Victoria" rose about 100 feet, and the blow-pipe being at work, it soon passed the neighboring summits.

"Now, Joe," said the doctor, "there still remains a large fortune if we can retain it until the end of our journey, and you will be a rich man to the end of your days."

Joe made no reply, and lay down gently upon his bed of minerals.

"Just look, my dear Dick, at the influence this metal has exercised upon the best lad in the world. What passions, what desires, what crimes might not be born of the knowledge of such a mine! It is melancholy."

In the evening the "Victoria" had made ninety miles towards the west; it was then a direct line of 1,400 miles to Zanzibar.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DESERT

THE "Victoria" was fastened to an almost withered and solitary tree, and the night passed tranquilly. The travelers were thus enabled to enjoy a little of that sleep of which they stood in so great need. The incidents of the past few days had left some sad memories.

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Towards morning the sky appeared in all its warmth and light. The balloon rose, and after many failures it encountered a current less rapid than before, which carried it towards the northwest.

"We do not make much progress," said the doctor. "If I do not mistake, we have accomplished the half of our journey in ten days, but at the rate we are now going it will take months to finish. That is so much the more to be regretted, as we are threatened with a scarcity of water."

"But we shall find some," replied Dick; "it is impossible that we should not fall in with some river, stream, or pond in this enormous stretch of country."

"I hope so, I'm sure."

"Don't you think it is Joe's baggage that keeps us back?"

Kennedy said this to tease the lad, and did so the more willingly that he had himself for a moment experienced the hallucinations of Joe; but not having let it appear, he assumed a stern countenance, laughing in his sleeve all the time.

Joe gave him a piteous look. But the doctor did not reply. He was thinking, not without secret terror, of the vast solitudes of the Sahara. Three weeks pass without the caravans meeting with a well where they can slake their thirst. So the travelers watched most anxiously for the least depressions of the ground. These precautions and the late incidents had had a sensible effect upon the spirits of all. They spoke less, and retired more into themselves.

The worthy Joe had not been the same man since his thoughts had plunged into the ocean of gold. He was silent, and thinking deeply about those stones heaped up in the car—to-day worthless, to-morrow, priceless.

The appearance of this part of the country was really alarming. The desert was opening up by degrees. Here were no villages, not even a collection of huts. Vegetation was gradually disappearing. A few stunted bushes as on Scotch moors, a whitish sand, flint stones, some mastic trees, and brushwood, that was all. In the midst of this sterility the primary formations of the world could be distinguished in the faces of the high and sharp-edged rocks..

These tokens of barrenness supplied Doctor Ferguson

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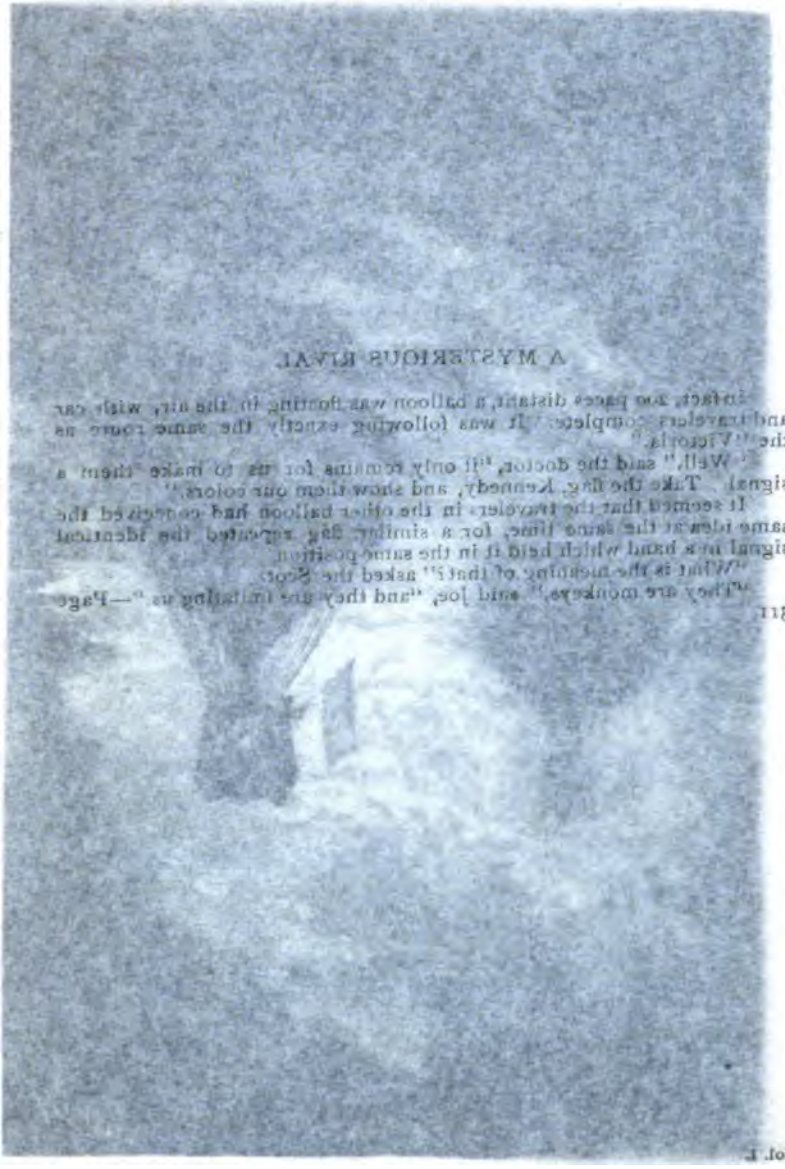

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In fact, 200 paces distant, a balloon was floating in the air, with car and travelers complete. It was following exactly the same route as the "Victoria."

"Well," said the doctor, "it only remains for us to make them a signal. Take the flag, Kennedy, and show them our colors."

It seemed that the travelers in the other balloon had conceived the same idea at the same time, for a similar flag repeated the identical signal in a hand which held it in the same position.

"What is the meaning of that?" asked the Scot.

"They are monkeys," said Joe, "and they are imitating us."—Page 311.

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with much food for thought. It did not appear to him that a single caravan had ever traversed this desert region; it would have left behind it visible traces of its encampment in the bleaching skeletons of man or beast.

But there was nothing, and they could but be aware that a boundless extent of sand was taking possession of the whole region.

However, as it was impossible to return, they must go forward. The doctor desired no better. He had been wishing for a storm to carry him beyond the limits of this region. But there was not a cloud in the sky. At the end of that day the "Victoria" had not accomplished thirty miles.

If only water were not required! But in all, they had but three gallons remaining. Ferguson put aside one gallon to assuage the burning thirst which the heat at ninety degrees rendered intolerable. Then two gallons remained for the blow-pipe; they could only produce 490 cubic feet of gas, and the blow-pipe required about nine cubic feet an hour; so they could only proceed therefore for fifty-four hours longer. This was a mathematical certainty.

"Fifty-four hours," said the doctor to his companions. "Now, as I have decided not to travel during the night, so as not to run the risk of passing a stream, a spring, or lake, we have just three days and a half more to travel, and during that period, we must obtain water at any price. I thought I ought to make you acquainted with the serious circumstances of the case, my friends, for I have put aside only one gallon for drinking purposes, and we must submit to a small allowance of it."

"By all means 'allowance' us," replied the Scot, "but we need not despair; you say we have three days before us still?"

"Yes, Dick."

"Well, complaining will do no good; in three days it will be time enough to take that line; till then, let us keep a good look-out."

At the evening meal, the water was strictly measured, the quantity of brandy was rather increased in the grog, but it was necessary to be cautious in using this liquor, more likely to cause thirst than to quench it.

The car rested during the night upon an immense plain,

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which was at a very low level. The height was scarcely 800 feet above the level of the sea. This circumstance gave the doctor some hope. He recalled the theories broached by geographers, respecting the existence of a vast expanse of water in the interior of Africa. But, if such a lake existed, they must arrive at it; still there was no change in the unruffled sky.

To a calm and starlit night succeeded a burning, stagnant day. From its earliest dawn, the temperature was broiling. At five o'clock in the morning the doctor gave the signal for departure, and for a long time the "Victoria" remained stationary in the leaden atmosphere.

The doctor had the power to escape this intense heat, by attaining a greater altitude, but to do this would necessitate the expenditure of a quantity of water, a thing now impossible. So he was constrained to maintain the balloon at a height of 100 feet, where a gentle breeze carried them towards the west. Breakfast consisted of dried meat and pemmican. At mid-day the "Victoria" had scarcely made any progress.

"We cannot go faster," said the doctor; "we do not command—we obey."

"Ah, my dear Samuel," said the Scot, "this is one of the occasions in which a propeller is not to be despised."

"No doubt, Dick, always admitting that it did not depend upon the action of water to move it, for in that case the position would be exactly similar. Up to the present time, however, nothing practical has been invented. Balloons are now at the point where ships were before the invention of steam. It took 6,000 years to bring out the paddle and the screw, so we have plenty of time to wait."

"Confound this heat," muttered Joe, wiping his forehead. "If we had sufficient water, this heat would do us good service, for it would expand the hydrogen, and we should not require so great a flame in the coil. It is true that, were we not at the end of our water-supply, we should not need to economize it. Ah! that cursed savage who obliged us to cast away that precious tank!"

"Do you regret what you have done, Samuel?"

"No, Dick, since we have been able to rescue that poor fellow from a horrible death. Yet the 100 lbs. of water which we cast away would have been very useful; there

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would then have been twelve or thirteen days' journey certain, and we could have crossed this desert in that time."

"I suppose we have got over half the journey at least," said Joe.

"In distance, yes, in time, no; if the wind drops. At present it appears likely to give out altogether."

"Well, let us go on," replied Joe, "there is no use complaining. We have got on pretty well hitherto, and whatever I do I am not going to despair. We shall find water, mark my words."

The ground, however, was still level, mile after mile, the last spurs of the "golden" mountains died upon the plain, these were the last efforts of exhausted nature! Scattered herbs began to take the place of the trees of the eastern side; a few patches of verdure here and there fought stoutly against the ever-encroaching sand. Great rocks, fallen from the neighboring heights, and broken in their fall, lay scattered in sharp pebbles, which soon became a coarser sand, and finally an imperceptible dust.

"There is Africa as it is represented, Joe. I am right in counseling patience.

"Well, sir," replied Joe, "this is nature, at any rate; between the sand and the heat, it would be absurd to search for anything in such a country as this. Don't you see," added he, laughing, "that I have no faith in your forests and your prairies. It is unreasonable. What was the use of coming so far to see merely a country like England? I now, for the first time, believe that I am in Africa, and I am not altogether sorry to see something of it."

In the evening the doctor calculated that the "Victoria" had not traveled twenty miles during that broiling day. A warm haze enveloped them as soon as the sun had set behind the horizon, which could be traced as distinctly as a straight line.

Next day was Thursday, the 1st of May, but the days succeeded each other with depressing monotony. One morning exactly resembled the preceding; mid-day brought its own rays, ever inexhaustible; and the night condensed in its gloom the scattered heat which the following day bequeathed to its successor, night. The wind, scarcely

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perceptible, became more like a breath than a breeze, and they could prophesy the moment when this breath would itself die away.

The doctor tried to overcome the weariness of the position. He retained the self-possession and coolness of a man inured to hardship. Glass in hand, he scanned the horizon in every direction. He perceived the east hills insensibly disappear, and the last traces of vegetation vanish away. Before him stretched the wide extent of the desert.

The responsibility which devolved upon him affected him a great deal, and the more as he sought to conceal the feeling. Those two men, Dick and Joe, friends both, he had brought from a distance almost by the force of friendship and duty. Had he done rightly? Was not this to attempt forbidden paths? Was not he in this journey attempting to pass the limits of the impossible? Had not Providence reserved the knowledge of this ungrateful continent for future generations.

All these thoughts, as he grew less hopeful, increased in his mind, and by an irresistible association of ideas, Samuel reasoned himself beyond his logic, and his better sense. After having made up his mind that there was nothing that it behooved him to do, he began to ask himself what he ought to do. Was it impossible to return? Did not some upper currents exist which would carry them back to less torrid climates. Sure of the regions passed, he was ignorant of the country in front. His conscience reproached him, and he determined to explain the circumstances frankly to his companions, and tell them the worst. He would show them what he had done, and what remained to do. If absolutely necessary, they might return—attempt to do so at least. What was their opinion?

"I have no opinion other than my master's," said Joe. "What he can endure, I can endure; or better than he. Where he goes I will go."

"And you, Kennedy?"

"I, my dear Samuel? I am not a man to despair; no one ignores less than I do the dangers of this expedition, but I have not particularly desired to examine them since the moment I determined to meet them with you. I am yours, body and soul. Under the circumstances, my ad-

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vice is that we ought to persevere—just go on to the end. So let us onward, you may reckon upon us."

"Thanks, my worthy friends," replied the doctor with visible emotion. "I anticipated your devotion, but these encouraging words were necessary to me. Once more I thank you from my heart."

And the three friends shook hands warmly.

"Listen to me," said Ferguson. "According to my calculations, we cannot be more than 300 miles from the Gulf of Guinea; the desert cannot therefore extend indefinitely, since the coast is inhabited and explored to a certain distance into the interior. If it become necessary, we must direct our course towards this coast, and it is impossible for us not to meet with some oasis or well where we can replenish our store of water. But we require wind, and without it we are kept becalmed in the air."

"Let us wait patiently," said Kennedy.

But each in his turn vainly scanned the desert. During the interminable day nothing appeared that could give birth to any hope. The last undulations of the ground disappeared as the sun was setting, and his rays stretched in long lines of fire over the immense plain. It was indeed the desert.

The travelers had not gained fifteen miles, having lost, including the previous day, 135 cubic feet of gas to keep the blow-pipe in action, and two pints of water out of eight had to be sacrificed to quench their raging thirst.

The night was quiet—too quiet. The doctor did not sleep.

CHAPTER XXV

THE UNEXPECTED BALLOON

THE next day there was the same clear sky and the same calm. The "Victoria" floated at about 100 feet high, but the little drift towards the west was scarcely perceptible.

"We are in the midst of the desert," said the doctor. "Look at the expanse of sand—what a strange sight—what a singular arrangement of nature! Why should there be such luxuriant vegetation farther back, and this extreme barrenness here, and this in the same latitude, under the same rays of the sun?"

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"The reason, my dear Samuel, does not disquiet me," replied Kennedy; "the 'why' preoccupies me less than the fact. It is thus, and that's the great point after all."

"It is a good thing to be something of a philosopher, my dear Dick—that can do no harm at any rate."

"Let us philosophize; I wish to do so very much. We have plenty of time—we are scarcely moving."

"The wind is afraid to blow; it is asleep."

"This cannot last," said Joe. "I fancy I see some streaks of cloud in the east."

"Joe is right," said the doctor.

"Good!" cried Kennedy. "I wonder whether we shall reach that cloud, with the beautiful rain and the strong wind it can give us."

"We shall soon see, Dick."

"This is Friday, sir; and I do not like Fridays."

"Well, I hope that even to-day you will lose your distrust for them."

"I hope so, sir. Ouf!" he cried, wiping his face. "Heat is an excellent thing, particularly in winter, but in summer it need not take such a mean advantage of us."

"Are you not afraid of the effects of the sun upon your balloon?" asked Kennedy of the doctor.

"No, the gutta-percha with which the silk is coated is able to endure a much higher temperature. I have sometimes submitted it inside to a heat of 158 degrees, and the 'envelope' does not appear to have suffered."

"A cloud, a real cloud!" cried Joe at this juncture, whose sharp eyes beat all glasses.

In fact, a thick and solid band was distinctly rising slowly above the horizon; it appeared large and bloated. It was a pile of small clouds which always kept their original shapes, from which the doctor concluded that no current of air existed in their masses.

This compact heap had appeared about eight o'clock in the morning; at eleven it had reached the sun, which disappeared entirely behind this thick curtain. At this very moment the lower end of the cloud rose above the horizon, which appeared clear and bright.

"It is only a single cloud, and we must not count upon it. Look, Dick, its form is exactly the same as it was this morning."

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"So, Samuel, there is neither rain nor wind for us, at least."

"I fear not, it keeps up very high."

"Well, Samuel, so we are going to hunt this cloud, which will not break over us?"

"I do not think that would do much good," replied the doctor; "that would expend a quantity of gas and water. But in a position such as ours, it will not do to neglect anything; we will go up higher."

The doctor developed a tremendous heat from the blowpipe, and the balloon soon rose under the influence of the expanded hydrogen.

About 1,500 feet from the ground, they encountered a thick mass of cloud, and entered into a thick mist pervading at this height, but they did not find the least breath of wind. The fog even appeared to be deprived of moisture, and objects exposed to contact with it were scarcely wetted. The "Victoria," enveloped in this vapor, perhaps proceeded a little faster there, but that was all.

The doctor was with sadness considering the very meager result obtained from his maneuver, when he heard Joe cry out in surprised accents:

"Oh! look here!"

"What is it, Joe?"

"Oh, sir! oh, Mr. Kennedy! is not that extraordinary!"

"What have you there?"

"We are not alone here! There are intruders; they have stolen our invention from us."

"Has he gone mad?" asked Kennedy.

Joe stood as immovable as a statue.

"I think the lad is suffering from sunstroke," said the doctor, turning towards him.

"What do you say?" said he.

"Look there, sir," said Joe, indicating a certain direction.

"By St. Patrick!" cried Kennedy, in his turn, "that is scarcely creditable. Samuel, Samuel, look here!"

"I see," replied the doctor quietly; "another balloon, with other travelers like ourselves."

In fact, 200 paces distant, a balloon was floating in the air, with car and travelers complete. It was following exactly the same route as the "Victoria."

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"Well," said the doctor, "it only remains for us to make them a signal. Take the flag, Kennedy, and show them our colors."

It seemed that the travelers in the other balloon had conceived the same idea at the same time, for a similar flag repeated the identical signal in a hand which held it in the same position.

"What is the meaning of that?" asked the Scot.

"They are monkeys," said Joe, "and they are imiating us."

"It means," replied Ferguson, laughing, "that it is yourself who is making the signal to you, my dear Dick; that is to say, that we ourselves are in the other car, and that that balloon is really our own 'Victoria.'"

"Well, sir, with all due respect to you," said Joe, "you will never make me believe that."

"Get up on the edge of the car, Joe, and wave your arms; then you will see if I am right."

Joe obeyed, and his gestures were exactly and instantaneously repeated.

"It is only the effect of mirage," said the doctor, "nothing more—a simple optical delusion—and is due to the unequal rarefaction of the air-strata—that's all."

"It is most extraordinary," said Joe, who could not take it all in, and kept waving his arms about to convince himself on the subject.

"A curious sight, indeed!" said Kennedy. "It is pleasant too to see our brave 'Victoria.' Do you know she has quite a grand appearance, and floats in a right royal manner."

"You have explained this appearance very well in your own way," said Joe, "but it is a singular effect all the same."

But the "double" of the "Victoria" gradually disappeared, the clouds ascended to a great height above the balloon, which did not attempt to follow them, and in about an hour they disappeared.

The wind, even hitherto scarcely perceptible, appeared to drop altogether. The doctor, in despair, descended towards the ground.

The travelers, who had been aroused from their preoccupation by the appearance of the mirage, again yielded

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to their gloomy thoughts, overcome by the tremendous heat.

Towards four o'clock Joe signaled some objects standing in relief against the sandy background, and soon he was able to announce that two palm-trees were visible at a short distance.

"Palms!" cried Ferguson; "then there is a fountain or a well there." He took up a telescope to assure himself that Joe had not made a mistake.

"At last!" he cried. "Water, water! we are saved; for although we are going very slowly, we are moving, and we must get there."

"Well, sir," said Joe, "suppose we have a drink in the meantime—the heat is stifling."

"By all means, my lad."

No one had any objections, and a pint of water was distributed. The store was now reduced to three and a half pints.

"Ah! that does one good," cried Joe. "Better than all Barclay and Perkins's brewings."

"Such are the advantages of privation," said the doctor.

"They are small, taking them altogether," said Kennedy; "and though I should never be allowed again to experience the pleasure of drinking a glass of water, I would consent to lose the pleasure as the condition of never being deprived of the substance."

At six o'clock the "Victoria" was floating about the palms. They were two miserably small, dried-up trees—two specters of trees, without foliage—more dead than alive. Ferguson contemplated them with fear in his heart.

At their base the broken stones of a well were discernible, but these stones, baked by the sun, seemed little more than dust. There was not the faintest trace of water. Ferguson's heart sank within him, and he was beginning to share the terrors of his companions, when their exclamations attracted his attention.

Stretching out of sight to the westward was extended a long line of whitened bones. Fragments of skeletons surrounded the fountain; evidently a caravan had reached thus far, marking its passage by a trail of bones! The weakest had fallen, one after the other, upon the distant sand; the stronger ones had struggled on to the desired

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fountain, and on its brink had found a horrible death.

The travelers gazed with whitened faces at these dreadful signs.

"Do not descend," said Kennedy; "let us fly this horrible sight. There is not a drop of water to be obtained."

"Not so, Dick. Let us do our best about this. We may as well pass the night here as anywhere else. We will sound these wells—a spring has existed here—perhaps there are traces of it still."

The "Victoria" was brought to the ground. Joe and Kennedy threw into the car a weight of sand equivalent to their own, and they got out. They ran towards the wells, and penetrated into the interior by means of a stairway, already crumbling to dust. The spring appeared to have been dried up for years. They dug into the dry and powdered sand—that most arid of all sands—but there was not even a trace of dampness.

The doctor saw them returning, perspiring, disheveled, and covered with fine dust; they were defeated, discouraged, and desperate. He perceived the failure of their search. He had expected such a result, and said nothing. He felt that from this day forward he must have courage and energy for all three.

Joe had brought up the remains of an old dried leather bottle, which he threw angrily amongst the bones scattered around him. During supper, not a word was spoken by the travelers; they ate without appetite. And yet they had not hitherto really suffered the torments of thirst, and they only despaired for the future.

CHAPTER XXVI

A DESPAIRING SEARCH

THE distance accomplished by the "Victoria" during the preceding day did not exceed ten miles, and to sustain her in the air they had used 162 cubic feet of gas.

On Saturday morning the doctor gave the signal for departure.

"The blow-pipe," said he, "can only work for six hours longer. If in that time we do not reach a well or spring, God alone knows what will become of us."

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"There is very little wind this morning," said Joe; "but perhaps it will increase," added he, seeing the scarcely-concealed anxiety of Ferguson.

Vain hope! The air was perfectly still—one of those calms which, in tropical climates, keep ships helpless for days. The heat became intolerable, and the thermometer marked 130° in the shade.

Joe and Kennedy lay side by side, and sought in sleep, or rather torpor, to forget the terrors of their position. This forced inactivity was most distressing. A man is to be pitied who is unable to divert his thoughts by work or occupation; but here there was nothing to watch over or to attempt to do any longer. They were obliged to submit to the situation, without any power to better it.

The sufferings arising from thirst now began to assert themselves cruelly. Brandy, far from allaying, rather increased them, and well does it merit the name of "tiger's milk," which has been bestowed upon it by the natives of Africa. About two pints of warm liquid was all that remained. Each one gloated over these precious drops, but no one dared to wet his lips. Two pints of water in the midst of the desert!

Then Doctor Ferguson began to reflect whether he had been wise in what he had done. Would it not have been better to have preserved the water he had decomposed to no purpose to maintain the balloon in the air? He had no doubt made a little progress, but were they any better for it? When he found he had gained sixty miles in this latitude, what did it matter, since they were in want of water at that place? The wind, if it did get up, would blow lower down as well as up there—even less strongly up there if it came from the east. But hope impelled Samuel forward. And yet those two gallons of water, expended in vain, would have sufficed for a nine-days' halt in the desert. And what changes might not nine days bring forth? Perhaps, however, while preserving this water, had he been able to ascend by throwing out ballast, he must have let the gas escape when he wished to descend. But the gas of the balloon was its very existence, its life-blood!

These thoughts, and a thousand others, passed through the doctor's brain. He sat for hours, his head clasped between his hands, and stirred not.

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"We must make a final effort," he said to his companions, about six o'clock. "We must endeavor to find an atmospheric current which will carry us forward. We must risk everything."

And while his friends slept he brought the hydrogen in the balloon to a very high temperature. The balloon filled out as the gas expanded, and mounted perpendicularly upwards. The doctor sought vainly for a breath of wind from a hundred feet to nearly five miles up. His point of departure was exactly beneath. A dead calm appeared to reign even up to the last limit of the atmospheric air.

At length the water failed; the blow-pipe ceased for want of gas; the Buntzen-pile stopped working; and the "Victoria," collapsing, descended quietly upon the sand, where the car had already hollowed out its impression.

It was mid-day; the bearings were 19° 35′ long., 6° 51′ lat.—nearly 500 miles from Lake Tchad, more than 400 miles from the western coast of Africa.

As the balloon touched the ground, Dick and Joe aroused from their torpor.

"We are stopping," said the Scot.

"We have no choice," replied the doctor in a grave tone.

His companions understood him. The level of the ground was of the level of the sea, in consequence of its uniform flatness; so the balloon maintained itself in perfect equilibrium, and was absolutely motionless.

The weight of the travelers was replaced by an equivalent charge of sand, and they alighted. Each was absorbed in thought, and for many hours no one spoke. Joe prepared supper of biscuit and pemmican, of which they ate little; a sip of tepid water completed this melancholy repast. No one kept watch during the night, yet no one slept. The heat was suffocating. Next day there was only half a pint of water remaining—the doctor put it by, resolved that it should not be touched, except in the last extremity.

"I am suffocating," Joe soon cried; "the heat is greater than ever. But that does not astonish me," he added, after consulting the thermometer; "it is 140°!"

"The sand is baking you," said the Scot, "as if it were

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an oven. And not a cloud to be seen in that fiery sky. It is maddening."

"We must not despair," said the doctor. "These great heats are invariably succeeded by storms in this latitude, and they arise with extreme rapidity. Notwithstanding the wonderful serenity of the sky, a great change may arise within an hour."

"But, after all, something must indicate it," said Kennedy.

"Well," replied the doctor, "it appears to me that the barometer is a trifle lower."

"Heaven grant it, Samuel, for we are now bound to earth like a bird with broken wings."

"With this difference, my dear Dick, that our wings are whole, and I have great hope they will serve us well yet."

"Oh for a wind! for wind!" cried Joe, "to waft us to a stream, or a well, and we should want nothing more; our provisions are sufficient, and with water we could remain a month without any trouble. But thirst is an awful thing."

Not only thirst, but there was the incessant contemplation of the desert to fatigue the mind; there was no rising ground, no sand-heap, not even a stone, upon which to fix the eyes. This flatness was irritating, and gave rise to what is denominated "the desert sickness." The impassibility of the blue dryness of the sky and the yellow expanse of the sand was terrifying. In this burning atmosphere the heat seemed to quiver as over a furnace; the mind grew desperate in beholding the fearful calm, and could not get a glimpse of any reason why or when such a state of things would have an end. The immensity was a sort of eternity.

Thus these unfortunate people, deprived of water in this torrid heat, began to experience symptoms of hallucination; their eyes grew hollow, and their vision became troubled.

When night fell the doctor resolved to shake off this feeling by a rapid walk; he wished to explore the sandy plain for several hours—not for exploring, but for walking's sake.

"Come!" said he to his companions; "believe me, it will do you good."

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"Impossible!" replied Kennedy, "I cannot stir a step."

"I would rather sleep," said Joe.

"But sleep or repose is deadly, my friends. Struggle against this languor. Come along!"

The doctor could prevail nothing, so he went away alone into the midst of the starry and transparent night. His first steps were made with difficulty—the steps of a man weakened and unaccustomed to walking—but he was well aware that the exercise would do him good. He advanced many miles towards the west, and his mind was already feeling more consoled, when suddenly he was seized with faintness; he fancied he was falling into a pit, he felt his knees give way beneath him—the vast solitude frightened him. He felt the central point of an infinite circumference, that is to say, nothing. The "Victoria" disappeared altogether in the darkness. The doctor was seized by a fearful foreboding—he, the cool, intrepid traveler. He wanted to return, but in vain. He called out; there was not even an echo to reply, and his voice fell into space like a stone cast into a bottomless abyss. He cast himself, almost swooning, upon the sand, alone amidst the terrible solitude of the desert.

At midnight he regained consciousness in the arms of his faithful Joe, who, anxious at his master's prolonged absence, had followed his tracks, firmly printed in the plain. He found him senseless.

"What has been the matter, sir?" inquired Joe.

"Nothing, my brave Joe; a momentary weakness, that's all."

"That will be nothing to hurt, sir; but get up and lean on me, and we will regain the 'Victoria.'" And the doctor, assisted by Joe, retraced his steps.

"It was imprudent of you sir; you should not have ventured alone. You might have been robbed," he added, laughing. "But seriously speaking, sir——"

"Well, I am listening."

"We must really do something; we cannot go on thus for many days longer and if no wind gets up, we are lost."

The doctor did not reply.

"Well, someone must sacrifice himself for the good of the rest; and it is only natural that I should."

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"What do you say? What is your plan?"

"A very simple plan, indeed. To take some food, and go straight ahead until I reach some place, which I cannot fail to do. Meantime, if Heaven send you a favorable wind, you need not wait for me—you can go. I, on my part, if I come to a village, will explain the circumstances with the words of Arabic you will write down for me, and I will bring you assistance if I lose my skin. What do you say to my plan?"

"It is madness, but worthy of your brave heart. It is out of the question that you can leave us."

"Well, we must try something, sir! it cannot hurt you, and, I repeat, you need not wait for me—perhaps I shall succeed."

"No, Joe, no; we must not separate—that would be an additional trouble to us. It was decreed that this should happen, and very likely it is decreed that something else shall happen later. So let us wait with resignation."

"So be it, sir; but I warn you of one thing. I will give you another day, I will not wait longer. This is Sunday, or rather Monday, as it is now one o'clock in the morning; if Tuesday does not see us off, I shall try my plan—that is decided."

The doctor made no reply, and they soon arrived at the balloon, where they sat down beside Kennedy. He was plunged in a silence so deep, that it could not have been sleep that bound him.

CHAPTER XXVII

DELUSIONS

THE doctor's first care on the morrow was to consult the barometer. It did not appear that the mercury had fallen in any appreciable degree. "Nothing," he said, "nothing to hope for."

He came out of the car and looked at the sky; there was the same heat, the same clearness, the same stillness. "Must we then really relinquish all hope?" he cried in vain.

Joe did not say a word—he was still pondering upon his project. Kennedy got up, but was very ill, and a prey

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to a restless excitement. He was suffering terribly from thirst. His tongue and lips were so swollen that he could scarcely utter a sound.

There were still a few drops of water remaining. Each man knew it, each thought of it, and felt attracted by it, but nobody dared to approach it.

These three companions and friends now looked at each other with haggard eyes, and with a feeling of horrible longing, which displayed itself in Kennedy chiefly. His powerful frame was less able to tolerate these privations. During all that day he was a prey to delirium; he moved about, uttering hoarse cries, biting his fingers, and ready to open a vein to assuage his thirst.

"Ah!" he cried. "Country of thirst, you are well named the region of despair!" Then he fell into a profound lethargy, and nothing could be heard but the sound of his breathing between his swollen lips.

Towards evening Joe was seized with symptoms of madness. The vast stretch of sand appeared to him an immense pond filled with clear and sparkling water. More than once he cast himself upon the burning ground to drink, and raising his mouth, filled with sand, would exclaim with anger: "Curse it, it is salt water!"

Afterwards, while Kennedy and Ferguson lay motionless, he was seized with an invincible desire to drink the few remaining drops of water kept in reserve. The wish overpowered him. He crept towards the car on all-fours; he devoured the contents of the bottle with his eyes; he cast a cautious look around, and seizing it, put it to his lips.

At this moment the words "Give me some, give me a drink," were uttered in despairing accents.

It was Kennedy, who had dragged himself towards Joe. The unhappy man was to be pitied; he begged upon his knees, he even wept. Joe wept too, and handed him the bottle, which Kennedy finished to the last drop.

"Thank you," he said. But Joe did not hear him, he had fallen, like Kennedy, upon the sand.

We will pass over the horrors of that night. But on Tuesday morning, under the fiery rays of the sun that bathed their limbs, the unfortunate travelers felt them withering up by degrees. When Joe attempted to rise, he

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found it was impossible to get up—he was unable to carry out his plan.

He looked around him. In the car the doctor, quite exhausted, his arms folded across his chest, was gazing into space, with a fixed and lack-luster look. Kennedy was really alarming, and kept shaking his head from side to side like a wild beast in a cage. Suddenly the Scot's glance fell upon his carbine, the stock of which protruded over the side of the car.

"Ha, ha!" he cried, raising himself by an almost superhuman effort. He made a dart to secure the gun; maddened and foolish, he directed the muzzle to his mouth.

"Sir, sir!"cried Joe, throwing himself upon Kennedy. They struggled furiously together.

"Go away, or I will kill you!" cried Kennedy.

But Joe held him with all his force, and thus they contended, without the doctor appearing to observe them, for nearly a minute. In the struggle the carbine suddenly exploded. At the noise of the discharge the doctor rose like a specter and looked around him.

"Down there; look there!" he cried.

He pointed to a certain point so energetically that Joe and Kennedy separated by mutual consent, and looked at him and then in the direction indicated.

The plain was agitated like a tempestuous sea. Waves of sand were tossed one upon the other in the midst of a fearful dust-cloud. An immense pillar of sand came from the southeast, whirling and eddying with tremendous swiftness. The sun disappeared behind a thick cloud, whose shade extended even to the "Victoria." The grains of fine sand glistened like liquid beads, and this rising sea gained upon them by degrees.

A swift beam of hope leaped from Doctor Ferguson's eyes.

"The simoon!" he cried.

"The simoon!" repeated Joe without understanding him.

"So much the better!" exclaimed Kennedy, with the anger of despair, "so much the better—we shall die!"

"So much the better," replied the doctor, "for, on the contrary, we shall live." And he began to cast out the sand which ballasted the car.

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His companions, understanding him, at last came to his assistance, and soon took their places in the car.

"Now, Joe," said the doctor, "throw over about fifty pounds of your mineral treasures."

Joe did not hesitate, though a pang of regret shot through him. The balloon began to rise.

"Just in time," said the doctor.

In fact the simoon came upon them like a thunderbolt. A little later and the "Victoria" would have been smashed, torn to pieces, annihilated.

The terrible whirlwind struck them and the balloon was covered with a shower of sand.

"More of that ballast, Joe," cried the doctor.

"There it goes," said Joe, throwing over an immense piece of quartz.

The "Victoria" mounted rapidly above the whirlwind, but surrounded by an immense vacuum of air, it was hurried along by the current at a frightful pace above the foaming sea of sand.

Neither Samuel, Dick, nor Joe spoke a word. They looked on in hope, and were, moreover, refreshed by the wind of this tempest.

At three o'clock the storm abated; the sand in falling formed a quantity of little heaps, the sky reappeared in all its former tranquillity. The "Victoria," now motionless, was in full view of an oasis, a little isle covered with green trees and rising from the surface of this ocean.

"Water! water!" exclaimed the doctor, and immediately opening the valve he permitted the escape of the hydrogen and descended gently at about 200 paces from the oasis. During a period of four hours they had traveled 240 miles.

The car was duly balanced, and Kennedy, followed by Joe, got down on the ground.

"Take your rifles," said the doctor, "and be cautious."

Dick caught up his carbine, Joe took one of the rifles. They advanced quickly up to the trees and penetrated amid the fresh verdure which announced the abundance of water. They took no notice of some large footprints and of the fresh trail which was indicated upon the damp ground.

Suddenly a roar resounded within twenty paces.

"'Tis the roar of a lion!" cried Joe.

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"All the better," replied the exasperated Scotchman; "one feels strong when there's fighting to be done."

"Do be prudent, Mr. Dick, pray be prudent—on the life of one depends the life of all now."

But Dick, who did not hear him, advanced with blazing eyes and loaded gun, terrible in his rashness. Beneath a palm tree an enormous lion with black mane was crouched. Scarcely did he perceive the hunter than he sprang at him; but he had not touched ground again when a bullet through the heart settled him. He fell dead.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried Joe.

Kennedy hurried towards the wells, slipping upon the damp steps, and stretched himself down beside a spring, in which he eagerly laved his swollen lips. Joe followed his example, and they heard nothing save the cries of the animals which they had disturbed by their approach.

"Be cautious, Mr. Dick," said Joe, as he took breath, "do not drink too much at first."

But Dick, without replying, continued drinking. He plunged his head and hands into the grateful water—he was like a man intoxicated.

"And about Mr. Ferguson?" said Joe.

This recalled Kennedy to himself. He filled a bottle he had brought and hurried up the steps. But what was his surprise—an enormous body closed up the opening! Joe, who followed Dick, drew him back with him.

"We are shut in!"

"It is impossible—what do you say——"

But Dick did not finish his sentence. A terrible roaring gave him to understand with what new enemy he had to do.

"Another lion!" cried Joe.

"No, a lioness—ah, wait a minute, you beast!" said Dick, quickly reloading his carbine.

He fired a moment after, but the animal had disappeared. "Come along," cried he.

"No, no, Mr. Dick, you have not killed her—she is crouching close here, and she will spring at the first who approaches, and he will be lost."

"But what can you do? We must get out. And Samuel is waiting for us."

"Let us 'draw' her. Take my gun and give me your carbine."

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"What is your plan?"

"You shall see."

Joe took off his jacket, and placing it upon the end of his gun, held it as a bait above the opening. The furious beast sprang down. Kennedy waited her appearance and gave her a bullet in the shoulder. The lioness roared and rolled down the steps, upsetting Joe. He was already fancying the enormous claws of the animal upon him, when a second shot was heard, and Doctor Ferguson appeared at the entrance, his rifle, still smoking, in his hand. Joe quickly got upon his feet, jumped over the carcass, and handed his master the bottle of water. To carry it to his lips and half empty it was for Ferguson the work of an instant, and the three travelers thanked Heaven, from the bottom of their hearts, for having so miraculously preserved them from a terrible death.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE HURRICANE

THE evening was beautiful, and was passed by our travelers under the grateful shade of the mimosas, after an excellent repast, in which tea and grog were not spared.

Kennedy had searched the little island in every direction; he had scoured the bushes, and the travelers were the only occupants of this terrestial paradise. They stretched themselves on the ground beneath their rugs, and enjoyed a quiet night's rest, which brought them forgetfulness of all their troubles.

Next day, the 7th of May, the sun shone brilliantly, but his rays were unable to penetrate the thick curtains of shade. They had provisions in plenty, and the doctor determined to remain at that place until a favorable wind rose.

Joe had got out his portable kitchen, and devoted himself to a series of culinary combinations, while he made use of the water with careless prodigality.

"What a strange succession of disappointment and pleasure!" cried Kennedy. "All this abundance after the privations we endured; luxury succeeding to despair. Ah! I was very nearly going mad!"

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"My dear Dick," said the doctor, "had it not been for Joe, you would not be sitting there holding forth upon the mutability of human affairs."

"My brave friend," said Dick, extending his hand to Joe.

"Oh, do not mention it," replied Joe. "You would do as much for me again, Mr. Dick; but I trust the opportunity to render me a simialr service will not arise."

"Ours is a poor nature," said Ferguson, "to allow itself to be overcome by so little."

"By so little water you mean, sir. That element is very necessary to life."

"Doubtless, Joe, and people deprived of food can exist longer than those deprived of water."

"I can quite believe it. Moreover, if necessary, one can eat anything, even one's fellow-creatures, although that would be a repast likely to last for a long time."

"Savages don't find it so, nevertheless," said Kennedy. "That is because they are savages, and accustomed to eat uncooked meat, but that is to me a disgusting habit."

"It is very distasteful, certainly," replied the doctor; "in fact, no one credits the accounts of the first African explorers, who have related that many tribes live on raw meat, and refused generally to admit the fact. A singular adventure happened to James Bruce under these circumstances."

"Tell us what it was, sir, we have plenty of time," said Joe, casting himself lazily upon the green grass.

"Willingly," replied the doctor. "James Bruce was a Scotchman, a native of Stirling, and who, in 1768-72, traversed Abyssinia as far as Lake Tyana, in his search for the sources of the Nile. He then returned to England, where he published his travels in 1790 or thereabouts. His statements were received with incredulity (an incredulity doubtless also in reserve for us). The habits of the Abyssinians appeared so very different from the British usages and customs, that no one would credit the accounts. Amongst other details James Bruce had stated that the tribes of eastern Africa were in the habit of eating raw meat. This statement raised a regular outcry against him. He might talk as he liked, they did not see it at all! Bruce was a very brave but a very quick-tempered man.

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These insinuations and doubts worried him very much. One day in a drawing-room in Edinburgh, a Scotchman repeated in Bruce's presence the subject of the daily jokes; and as to the uncooked meat, he did not believe it was either possible or true. Bruce made no remark. He went out of the room and shortly afterwards returned with a raw beefsteak, salted and peppered after the African manner.

"'Sir,' said he to the Scot, 'in throwing doubt upon what I have declared to be true, you have gravely insulted me, and in disbelieving the possibility of the occurrence, you have made a great mistake. Now, to prove it, you are going to eat this raw steak, or give me satisfaction!' The Scot was a coward, and he ate the steak with many grimaces. Then, with great coolness, Bruce added: 'Supposing, even, that the thing is not true, sir, you will hardly in future maintain that it is impossible!'"

"A capital retort," said Joe. "If the Scot got indigestion, it was no more than he deserved; and if, when we return to England, anyone cast doubts on our journey——"

"Well, Joe, what will you do?"

"I will make the skeptics eat the fragments of the 'Victoria,' without salt or pepper!"

All laughed at Joe's determination. So the day wore on in pleasant chat; with strength, hope returned—with hope, boldness. The past was effaced by the future with providential rapidity. Joe did not wish to leave this delightful asylum. It was the country of his dreams; he felt at home here, he obliged his master to take the exact bearings, and he wrote it with much ceremony in his notebook, 15° 43′ longitude, 8° 32′ latitude. Kennedy only regretted his inability to hunt or shoot in that miniature forest; in his eyes the place only wanted a few wild beasts, to be perfectly charming.

"Well, my dear Dick, you have a very bad memory. How about that lion and lioness?" said the doctor.

"That's nothing," replied Dick, with a true hunter's contempt for what he had killed. "But, as a matter of fact, we may suppose their presence in this oasis is indicating our approach to more fertile regions."

"By no means a certain proof, Dick; these animals, impelled by hunger or thirst, often travel immense distances.

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During the approaching night we must watch with redoubled vigilance, and light fires."

"In this heat!" cried Joe. "However, if necessary, it must be done. But it is a great pity to burn this pretty wood, which has been so welcome to us!"

"We will take great care not to set it on fire," said the doctor, "so that other people may find in it a refuge in the midst of the desert."

"It shall be taken care of. But, sir, do you think this oasis is known to exist?"

"Certainly. It is a halting-place for the caravans which frequent the center of Africa, and their visit might not be acceptable to you, Joe."

"Are those horrible Nyam-Nyams here then?"

"Without doubt that is the general name of all these people; and under the same climate the same race have like customs."

"Pooh!" said Joe; "after all, it is very natural. If savages possessed the tastes of gentlemen where would be the difference? For example, look at these brave people who would not have to be asked to swallow the beefsteak of the Scotchman—or even the Scot himself."

With this rational remark, Joe proceeded to get the wood piles ready for the night, making them as small as possible. These precautions were happily unnecessary, and each one in turn enjoyed a good night's rest.

Next day the weather was unchanged—it remained obstinately fine. The balloon would be motionless until a breeze arose to move it. The doctor began to feel uneasy once more. If the journey became thus extended the provisions would not hold out. After having survived the want of water, were they to be reduced to die of hunger?

But he felt reassured when he perceived a decided fall of the mercury in the barometer; there were evident symptoms of a change. He determined, therefore, to prepare for departure and profit by the very first opportunity. The supply tank and the water tank were both filled.

Ferguson then set about the re-establishment of the equilibrium of the balloon, and Joe was obliged to sacrifice a quantity of the precious mineral he possessed. With renewed health, ambition reasserted itself. He made more excuses than before ere he obeyed his master, but the latter

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pointed out how impossible it was to raise such a weight. It was a choice between water and ore. Joe hesitated no longer, and cast away upon the sand a quantity of his beloved pebbles.

"They will serve for those who follow us," he said. "They will be very much astonished to find a fortune in such a place."

"Suppose," said Kennedy, "that some learned traveler should meet with these specimens?"

"No doubt he would be very much surprised, my dear Dick, and would equally publish his surprise. Some day we shall hear of a wonderful deposit of auriferous quartz in the midst of the sandy desert of Africa."

"And Joe will have been the cause."

The idea of mystifying some learned professor somewhat consoled this brave lad, and he smiled.

During the remainder of the day the doctor watched in vain for a change in the sky—the heat became greater, and without the shade of the oasis would have been intolerable. The thermometer in the sun marked 149°. A regular rain of fiery rays traversed the air. This was the greatest heat they had yet noted.

Towards evening Joe prepared the watch-fires, and during the vigils of the doctor and Kennedy nothing particular occurred. But towards three in the morning—Joe was watching—the temperature fell suddenly, the sky became obscured, and the darkness increased. "Get up!" cried Joe, waking his companions; "get up—the wind is coming!"

"At last!" cried the doctor, looking up at the sky.

"It is a regular storm! To the balloon—to the 'Victoria!'"

They were only just in time. The "Victoria" was bending beneath the force of the storm, and was dragging the car across the sand. Had any part of the ballast been out of her the balloon would have sailed away, and then all hope of regaining her would have been lost.

But Joe, quick as ever, ran as hard as he could and stopped the car, while the balloon beat along the sand, at the risk of being torn to pieces. The doctor took his usual place, lighted up the blow-pipe, and threw out the excess weight.

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The travelers took a last look at the trees of the oasis, which were bending with the force of the wind, and soon, running before the east wind at about 200 feet above the ground, they disappeared into the darkness of the night.

CHAPTER XXIX
MOUNT ATLANTIKA

FROM the moment of departure our travelers went at a tremendous pace—they longed to quit this desert, which had nearly proved so fatal. Towards nine o'clock some appearance of vegetation was perceived—herbs floating, as it were, upon the sea of sand, and announcing, as to Christopher Columbus, the approach of land—green blades pushed themselves up timidly between the stones which were themselves the rocks in this ocean.

A low-lying chain of hills appeared upon the horizon; their profile, dwarfed by the haze, was rather indistinct, but the monotony was over. The doctor joyously saluted this new region, and, like a sailor, he was on the point of exclaiming, "Land! land!"

An hour later the continent was extended before his gaze—still wild, but less flat, less bare, for some trees rose against the gray sky.

"We are, then, in a civilized country at last!" said the Scot.

"Civilized, Mr. Dick? that is your way of looking at it; we can see no inhabitants yet."

"We shall soon," replied Ferguson, "at the rate we are going."

"Shall we always be among negroes, Mr. Samuel?"

"Always, Joe, until we arrive amongst Arabs."

"Arabs, sir; real live Arabs, with camels?"

"No, without the camels; these animals are scarce, not to say unknown, in these districts; we must go some degrees farther north to meet them."

"That is unfortunate."

"Why, Joe?"

"Because, if the wind shifted, we might make them help us!"

"How?"

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"Sir, it is an idea that has come into my head. We could yoke them to the car, and be dragged by them. What do you think of it?"

"My poor Joe, this idea has been started before. It has been exploded by a very excellent French writer—in a romance, it is true. Travelers harness camels to their balloon; they come in contact with a lion, who eats the camels, swallows the harness, and does the dragging instead of the camels—and so on. You see that all this is imagination, and has nothing in common with our system of locomotion."

Joe, who was somewhat humiliated at the thought that his notion had been already made use of, began to think of some animal who could devour a lion, but, finding none, he set about examining the country again. A lake of moderate extent was now in sight, with an amphitheater of hills, which had not yet attained the dignity of mountains. Here numerous fertile valleys were stretched out, and boasted an inextricable variety of trees.

"The country is splendid," said the doctor.

"Look at those animals; men cannot be far distant," said Joe.

"Ah! what magnificent elephants," said Kennedy. "Is there no chance of a little shooting?"

"How on earth are we to stop, my dear Dick, with a current of this velocity. No, you must taste a little of the torture of Tantalus. You shall have amends by and by."

There was something to excite the hunter's imagination. Dick's breast bounded and his hands mechanically gripped his "Purdey."

The fauna of the country equaled the flora. The wild oxen disported in the thick grass, in which they were entirely concealed; elephants, gray, black, and yellow, of enormous size, passed like a hurricane through the forest, crashing, biting, destroying, as they went, and making their progress by devastation. On the wooded slope of the hills, cascades and streams ran down towards the north. There the hippopotami bathed with much noise; and the manatees, twelve feet in length, with fish-like bodies, disported themselves on the banks, raising towards the sky their rounded breasts distended with milk.

It was a rare menagerie in a wonderful conservatory,

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where birds without number, of a thousand different hues, presented varied changes of color as they flew amongst the arborescent plants.

At this prodigality of nature the doctor was reminded of the superb kingdom of Adamosa. "We are now drawing near the traces of modern discovery," he said. "I have caught up the missing trace of the travelers; it is by a happy fatality, my friends, that we are enabled to connect the labors of Captains Burton and Speke with the explorations of Doctor Barth. We quitted England to find a Hamburgher, and we shall soon reach the extreme point attained by that adventurous professor."

"It appears to me," said Kennedy, "that between the two discoveries there is a vast extent of country, if one may judge from the distance we have traveled."

"It is easy to calculate; take the map, and see what is the longitude of the southern point of Lake Ukéréoné attained by Speke."

"Close upon the 37th degree."

"And the town of Yola, which we shall see to-night, and to which Barth penetrated—how is it situated?"

"On the 12th degree of longitude nearly."

"That makes it twenty-five degrees, which, at sixty miles each, is 1,500 miles."

"A nice journey," said Joe, "for people who walk."

"That will nevertheless be accomplished. Livingstone and Moffat are always advancing towards the interior; the Nyassa, which they have discovered, is not very far distant from Lake Tanganyika, found by Burton; before the end of the century these immense tracts will be explored. But," added the doctor, as he consulted the compass, "I regret that the wind is carrying us so much towards the west; I would have preferred to go northward."

After twelve hours' progress the "Victoria" arrived at the boundary of Nigritia. The first inhabitants of this territory, the Chouan Arabs, were feeding their horned flocks. The vast summits of Mount Atlantika appeared above the horizon, mountains which no European foot had ever trodden, and whose altitude is estimated at 7,800 feet. Their western slopes determine the direction of the streams of this part of Africa to the ocean. They are the "Mountains of the Moon" of this region.

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At length a true river greeted the eyes of the travelers, and by the immense ant-hills which bordered it, the doctor recognized the Benoué, one of the great tributaries of the Niger, that which the natives have named the "Source of Waters."

"This river," said the doctor to his companions, "will one day become the natural channel of communication with the interior of Nigritia. Under the command of one of our brave captains, the *Pleiad* advanced as far as the town of Yola. You see that we are in a known country."

Numerous slaves were employed in tilling the fields, cultivating the "sorgho," a species of millet which forms the staple food of the community. The most stupid astonishment was apparent as the "Victoria" passed like a meteor. In the evening our travelers stopped at forty miles from Yola, and in front, but at a distance, the two sharp peaks of the Mount Mendif raised themselves.

The doctor threw out the grapnels, and they caught in the summit of a high tree, but the high wind bent the "Victoria" down almost horizontally, and rendered the position of the car very dangerous.

Ferguson did not close his eyes all night, he was frequently on the point of cutting the cable and flying before the hurricane. At last the storm lulled and the oscillations of the balloon were no longer alarming.

Next day the wind was more moderate, but it carried the travelers beyond the town of Yola, which, newly built by the Foulannes, had excited the curiosity of Ferguson. Nevertheless he was obliged to resign himself to be carried to the north, and even a little to the east.

Kennedy suggested a halt for hunting purposes. Joe pretended that the want of fresh meat was beginning to be felt; but the savage customs of the country, the attitude of the population, some shots sent in the direction of the "Victoria," all determined the doctor to continue his journey. They then crossed a region—a theater of massacres and burnings, where fighting is incessant, and in which the sultans rule their kingdoms in the midst of the most horrible slaughter.

Numerous and populous villages, composed of long huts, appeared between splendid pastures, of which the thick grass was mixed with violet blossoms; the huts resembled

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vast hives, and were screened behind bristling palisades. The wilder slopes of the hills recalled to Kennedy's mind the glens of the Scottish Highlands, and he frequently made the remark.

Despite the doctor's efforts the balloon was drifted towards the northeast, in the direction of Mount Mendif, which was hidden in the clouds. The high summits of these mountains separate the basin of the Niger from that of Lake Tchad.

Bagalé, with its eighteen villages hung upon its flanks, soon appeared, like a group of children round their mother; a magnificent group for those who, being overhead, could take the whole in at once. At three o'clock the "Victoria" was opposite Mount Mendif. They could not avoid it, so were obliged to go over it. The doctor, by means of a temperature of 180°, gave to the balloon a new ascensional force of nearly 1,600 lbs. It rose more than 8,000 feet. This was the greatest elevation obtained during the journey, and the temperature was so low that the doctor and his companions were glad to make use of their rugs.

Ferguson hastened to descend, for the envelope of the balloon threatened disruption. He had time, however, to verify the volcanic origin of the mountain, whose extinct craters were only deep chasms. Great agglomerations of the dung of birds gave the sides of the Mendif the appearance of calcareous rocks, and there was sufficient there to manure the whole United Kingdom.

At five o'clock the "Victoria," impelled by the south wind, sailed slowly along the slopes of the mountain, and halted in a large open space at a distance from any habitation. So soon as they touched the ground, precautions were taken to secure the balloon firmly, and Kennedy, gun in hand, started in the plain. He was not long before he returned with half-a-dozen wild ducks and a sort of snipe, which Joe served up to the best of his ability. The meal was a pleasant one, and the night passed without any disturbance.

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CHAPTER XXX

THE INCENDIARY PIGEONS

NEXT day, the 11th of May, the "Victoria" resumed her adventurous course; the travelers had in her the same confidence as a sailor feels in his ship.

Fearful hurricanes, tropical heat, dangerous ascents, even more dangerous descents, were experienced by the "Victoria," and happily overcome always and through everything. One might say that Ferguson guided her by a gesture; and without knowing the point of arrival, the doctor had no fear respecting the issue of the journey. But in this land of barbarians and fanatics, prudence obliged him to take the greatest precautions, and he enjoined his companions to keep their eyes open ready for anything at any time.

The wind carried them a little more to the north, and towards nine o'clock they came in sight of the large town of Mosfeia, built upon an eminence shut in between two high mountains. It was situated in an impregnable position; a road between a marsh and a wood was the only approach to it.

At this moment a sheik, accompanied by a mounted escort, clad in bright-colored robes, preceded by trumpeters and runners who cut down the opposing branches, was about to make his entry into the city.

The doctor descended so as to see the natives a little nearer, but scarcely had the balloon come into their range of vision when signs of terror began to manifest themselves, and they scampered away as fast as their legs or their horses could carry them. The sheik alone did not move, he cocked his long musket and waited proudly.

The doctor approached within 150 paces, and, in his most pleasant tone, addressed to him the Arab welcome.

But at these words falling from the sky, the sheik dismounted, and prostrated himself in the dust of the road; and the doctor was not able to prevent this act of worship.

"It is impossible," said he, "but that these people should take us for supernatural beings, since, on the arrival of the first Europeans amongst them, they believed them to be a divine race. And when this sheik speaks of this encounter in future he will not fail to elaborate the details

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with all the resources of an Arab's imagination. Judge then what their legends will be respecting us some of these days."

"That will be rather disappointing from the civilization point of view," replied Kennedy. "It would be better to pass for simple men, who would give these negroes an excellent idea of European power."

"Agreed, my dear Dick; but what could we do here? You might explain at length to the wise men the mechanism of the balloon, which they would not understand, and would always suppose it to be a supernatural appearance."

"Sir," said Joe, "you have spoken of the first Europeans who explored this country; who were they, if you please?"

"My dear boy, we are precisely on the track of Major Denham. It was at this very Mosfeia that he was received by the Sultan of Mandara; he had left the Bornou. He accompanied the sheik in an expedition against the Fellatabs; he assisted at the attack on the town, which resisted bravely with its arrows against the Arabs' bullets, and put the troops of the sheik to flight; all this was but a pretext for murder, pillage, and raids. The major was completely stripped, and had it not been for a horse, beneath whose belly he crept, and which enabled him to escape his conquerors by its headlong gallop, he would never have reentered Kouka, the capital of Bornou."

"But who was this Major Denham?"

"A brave Englishman, who from 1822 to 1824, commanded an expedition into the Bornou, in company with Captain Clapperton and Doctor Oudney. They left Tripoli in the month of March, arrived at Mourzouk, the capital of Fezzan; and, following the route which Doctor Barth traversed afterwards on his return to Europe, they arrived on the 16th of February, 1823, in Bornou, in the Mandara, and at the eastern side of the lake. During this time, on the 15th December, 1823, Captain Clapperton and Doctor Oudney penetrated into the Soudan as far as Sackatou, and Oudney died of fatigue and privation at Murmur."

"This part of Africa," said Kennedy, "has then paid a large tribute of victims to science."

"Yes! this region is indeed fatal. We are tending directly towards the kingdom of Barghimi, which Vogel

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crossed in 1856 to pentrate into the Wadaï, where he disappeared. This young man of twenty-three was despatched to co-operate in the explorations of Doctor Barth; they met on the 1st December, 1854, then Vogel commenced to explore the country; about 1856 he announced in his last letters his intention to examine the kingdom of Wadaï, into which no European had ever previously penetrated. It seems he reached Wara, the capital, where, according to some accounts, he was made prisoner; according to others he was put to death, for having attempted to ascend a sacred mountain in the neighborhood. But we must not lightly accept the report of the death of travelers, for that would obviate any search for them; thus, how often was the death of Doctor Barth officially announced, a circumstance which naturally caused him great irritation. It was therefore very possible that Vogel had been kept a prisoner by the Sultan of Wadaï, in the hope to obtain ransom. Baron Neimaus set out for Wadaï, but he died at Cairo in 1855. We know now that M. Heuglin, with the expedition despatched from Leipsic, followed up the traces of Vogel. Thus we ought to be soon assured of the fate of this youthful and interesting traveler."

Mosfeia had long since disappeared on the horizon. Mandara betrayed its astonishing fertility to the eyes of the travelers, with its acacia forests, the red-flowering locust plant, and the herbaceous plants in the cotton and indigo fields. The Shari, which flows into Lake Tchad eighty miles farther on, here rolled its impetuous course along.

The doctor followed with his companions the maps of Barth. "You see," said he, "that the works of this *savant* are wonderfully precise. We are traveling right over the district of Loggoum, and perhaps even upon Kernak, its capital. There poor Toole died, when scarcely twenty-two. He was a young Englishman, an ensign in the 80th foot, who had for some weeks been with Major Denham in Africa, and he there quickly found his death. 'Ah! they may well call this country the 'Cemetery of Europeans.'"

Some canoes about fifty feet long were descending the Shari. The "Victoria," 1,000 feet above them, attracted little attention from the natives, until the wind, which had hitherto been blowing strongly, showed signs of diminishing.

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"Are we again going to be becalmed, I wonder?" said the doctor.

"Well, sir, we have neither the want of water nor the desert to fear now."

"No, but the population is still very formidable."

"There" said Joe, eagerly, "is something that resembles a town."

"It is Kernak. The last breath of wind will carry us thither, and if it suits us, we can take an exact plan of the place."

"Can we not go nearer to it?" asked Kennedy.

"Nothing is more easy, Dick," said the doctor. "We are exactly over the town. Allow me to turn the tap of the blow-pipe a little, and we shall soon descend."

In half an hour the "Victoria" was floating motionless, about 200 feet from the ground.

"We are here nearer to Kernak," said the doctor, "than a man would be to London, if he were perched on the dome of St. Paul's. So we can observe at our ease all that is going on."

"What is that sound of mallets that we hear on all sides?"

Joe watched attentively, and perceived that the noise was produced by the number of weavers, who were beating their cloths stretched upon the large trunks of trees.

The capital of Loggoum was viewed in its entirety, like a plan unrolled at their feet. It was a veritable town, with lines of houses and good-sized streets. In the center of a large square a slave-market was held, and there was a large concourse of purchasers; for the Mandara women, with their little hands and feet, are very much sought after, and are sold for high prices.

At sight of the "Victoria," the oft-produced effect was again repeated—first cries, then profound stupefaction; business was abandoned, work suspended, the noise was hushed. The travelers remained immovable, and did not lose a detail of this populous city; they even descended to a distance of sixty feet from the ground.

Then the governor of Loggoum came out of his house, displaying his green flag, and accompanied by his musicians, who blew enthusiastically with the full force of their lungs into their hoarse buffalo horns. The crowd assembled round

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him. Doctor Ferguson wished to make himself heard, but he could not succeed.

The people, who had high foreheads, curly hair, and almost aquiline noses, appeared proud and intelligent, but the presence of the "Victoria" disturbed them mightily. The travelers perceived horsemen galloping in all directions; soon it became evident that the soldiers were being assembled to give battle to this extraordinary enemy. Joe had lavishly displayed handkerchiefs of various colors, but without any result.

However, the sheik, surrounded by his court, proclaimed silence, and made a speech in a mixed language of Arabic and Baghimi, of which the doctor did not understand a word. He comprehended, however, by the universal language of signs, that he was particularly requested to depart; he asked for nothing better, but in default of wind it had become impossible. His immobility angered the governor, and his courtiers begged him to give loud orders for the departure of the monster.

They were curious people, these courtiers, with their five or six motley shirts upon their bodies; they were enormously stout, and some appeared to wear artificial stomachs. The doctor astonished his companions by telling them that this was the mode of paying court to the Sultan. The rotundity of the abdomen indicated the ambition of the people. These fat men gesticulated and shouted, and one more than all the rest, who ought to have been prime minister if his size met with any favor. The crowd of negroes joined their shouting to that of the courtiers, repeating their gesticulations like so many monkeys, and which resulted in a curious and instantaneous effect in the simultaneous movement of 10,000 arms.

To these modes of intimidation, which appeared to be insufficient, they added others more formidable. Soldiers, armed with bows and arrows, were drawn up in order of battle; but the "Victoria" had already been inflated, and moved quietly out of range. The governor then seized a musket and leveled it at the balloon, but Kennedy was on the watch, and with a ball from his carbine, shattered the musket in the sheik's grasp.

At this unlooked-for blow there was a general retreat; each one took shelter in his house as quickly as possible,

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and during the rest of the day the town remained absolutely deserted.

Night arrived; the wind had dropped. It was resolved to pass the night at 300 feet from the ground. Not a gleam shone through the darkness—a deathlike silence reigned around.

The doctor redoubled his watchfulness; this calm betokened some treachery.

And Ferguson was right to watch as he did. Towards midnight all the town appeared on fire; hundreds of fiery streaks crossed each other like rockets, forming a network of flame.

"That is very curious," said the doctor.

"But, God bless me!" cried Kennedy, "It appears that the fire is ascending and approaching us."

In fact, at the sound of frightful cries, and amid the discharges of muskets, this mass of fire rose up towards the "Victoria." Joe made ready to throw out the ballast. Ferguson did not stop to ascertain the cause of the phenomenon.

Thousands of pigeons, their tails furnished with squibs, had been let loose against the "Victoria." Terrified, they ascended, marking their flight with fiery zigzags. Kennedy was about to discharge all the firearms into the midst of the crowd of birds, but what could he accomplish against such an innumerable host? Already the pigeons had surrounded the car and the balloon, of which the sides, reflecting the light, appeared wrapped in flames.

The doctor did not hesitate, and throwing over a large lump of quartz, he rose above the reach of these dangerous birds. For two hours they could perceive them flying backwards and forwards in the darkness; by degrees their numbers diminished and finally they disappeared.

"Now we can sleep in peace," said the doctor.

"Rather a happy thought of the savages," said Joe.

"Yes; they very commonly employ pigeons to burn the thatches of houses in the villages, but this time the village flew up higher than their winged incendiaries."

"A balloon has decidedly no enemies to fear," said Kennedy.

"Yes, indeed it has," replied the doctor.

"Who, then?"

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"The imprudent people whom it carries in its car; so, my friends, vigilance above everything—vigilance always!"

CHAPTER XXXI
A LOST BULLET

About three o'clock in the morning, during Joe's watch, the town appeared to move beneath them, and the "Victoria" sailed away. Kennedy and the doctor awoke.

The latter consulted the compass, and perceived with satisfaction that the wind was bearing them to the nor-nor-east.

"We are getting on capitally," said he. "All goes well, and we shall come in sight of Lake Tchad this very day."

"Is it a large expanse of water?" asked Kennedy.

"A very considerable size, my dear Dick; at its greatest length and breadth it measures 120 miles."

"It will be a little change for us to sail over such a sheet of water."

"Well, it seems to me that we have nothing to grumble at; the country is very varied, and we are enjoying it under the most pleasant conditions."

"No doubt, Samuel. Except the privations of the desert we have not encountered any serious danger."

"Certainly, our tight little 'Victoria' has behaved wonderfully. To-day is the 12th of May; we started on the 18th of April, so we have been traveling twenty-five days. Ten days more and we shall reach the end of our journey."

"Where?"

"I do not know; but what does that matter?"

"You are right, Samuel; let us trust in Providence to take care of us and keep us in good health, as we are. We do not look much like people who have been traversing the most pestilential country in the world."

"We have been able to keep up so high, that is the reason we have been so well."

"Hurrah for aërial traveling!" cried Joe. "Here we are after twenty-five days, in good health, well fed, well rested; indeed, rather too well rested, for my limbs are getting stiff, and I should not be sorry to take the stiffness off with a thirty mile walk."

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"You shall indulge yourself in that way in the streets of London, Joe. But to wind up, we are a party of three like Denham, Clapperton, and Overweg—like Barth, Richardson, and Vogel, and happier than our predecessors. All three of us are together still. But it is very important not to separate. If, during the absence of one of us on the ground, the 'Victoria' were obliged to ascend in order to avoid some sudden and unforseen danger, who knows whether we might come together again. So I tell you frankly, Kennedy, I do not wish you to go far away under the pretext of hunting."

"You must, nevertheless, allow me, my dear Samuel, to overcome this fancy; there is no great harm in renewing our stock of provisions. Besides, before our departure from home, you put before me a series of wonderful hunting exploits, and, up to this time, I have done very little in the way of Anderson or Cumming."

"Surely, my dear Dick, your memory fails you; or your modesty stands in the way of your prowess. It appears to me that, without reckoning smaller game, you have already an antelope, an elephant, and two lions on your conscience."

"Well, what is that for an African sportsman, who can have a shot at every created animal? Look here! look at this drove of giraffes!"

"Those giraffes!" cried Joe. "Why, they are only as big as my fist!"

"Because we are 1,000 feet above them," replied Kennedy; "but if you were nearer, you would see they were three times as high as you; and there are some ostriches going like the wind!"

"Ostriches!" said Joe; "they are fowls, and nothing more!"

"Cannot we get nearer to them, Samuel?"

"Yes, we can approach them, but cannot land. And what good, after all, is there in shooting animals which are of no use to us? If the question were the destruction of a lion, a tiger-cat, or a hyena, I could understand it, there would be always a dangerous beast the less; but to destroy an antelope, or a gazelle, without any profit but to satisfy the vanity of the sportsman, is not worth the trouble. However, my friend, we will keep at about 100 feet above

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the ground, and if you can perceive any wild animal you can send a bullet to his heart."

The "Victoria" descended by degrees, but still kept up at a safe distance. In this savage and thickly-populated country it was necessary to be on one's guard against unexpected danger.

The travelers followed the course of the Shari. The pleasant banks of this river were hidden beneath the shade of the variously tinted trees; the bind-weed and creeping plants wound in all directions, and produced curious combinations of colors. The crocodiles sported in the sun and plunged into the water with the activity of the lizard, and in their play they crossed numerous green islets, which rose amid the stream.

Thus, in the enjoyment of a luxurious and verdant natural scenery, the district of Maffatay was passed. Towards nine in the morning Ferguson and his companions at length reached the southern coast of Lake Tchad. There was the Caspian of Africa, whose existence was for a long time regarded as fabulous. This inland sea, to which only the expeditions of Denham and Barth had hitherto penetrated, lay before them.

The doctor attempted to decide its actual form, already very different from its shape in 1847; in fact, the map of this lake it is impossible to reconcile with the lake itself. It is surrounded by miry marshes which are almost impassable, and in which Barth nearly perished. From year to year these marshes, covered to a height of fifteen feet with reeds and papyrus, become absorbed into the lake, and often the towns established upon its banks are half submerged, as happened at Ngornou, in 1856, and now alligators and hippopotami swim about in the very spots where the habitations of the natives once stood.

The sun poured down his rays upon this calm sheet of water, and in the north, sky and water seemed to unite upon the horizon.

The doctor was desirous to ascertain the nature of the water, which was for a long time believed to be saline; there was no danger in approaching the surface of the lake, and the car skimmed over it like a bird, at five feet distance.

Joe plunged a bottle into it and raised it half filled; the

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water was not very drinkable, and possessed a flavor of natron.

While the doctor was noting down the result of his experience, the report of a gun resounded beside him. Kennedy had not been able to resist sending a bullet at a monstrous hippopotamus, which quietly disappeared at the sound of the discharge, and the conical bullet did not appear to have caused him the least inconvenience.

"You had better have harpooned him," said Joe.

"How?"

"With one of our grapnels. That would have been a good hook for such an animal."

"By Jove!" cried Kennedy, "Joe has really got an idea."

"Which I trust you will not put into execution," replied the doctor. "The animal would quickly hurry us where we should be helpless."

"Particularly now that you have decided upon the quality of the water of Lake Tchad."

"Is that fish good to eat, Mr. Ferguson?"

"Your fish, Joe, is a mammiferous animal of the pachyderm species; his flesh is excellent, they say, and is an article of commerce amongst the lake tribes."

"Then I regret that Mr. Dick's bullet was not more effectual."

"This animal is only vulnerable in the belly and between the thighs; the bullet did not even break the skin. But, if the ground be suitable, we shall halt, and at the southern end of the lake there Kennedy will find a full menagerie, and he can indemnify himself at his ease."

"Well, I hope that Mr. Dick will do a little hippopotamus hunting. I want to taste this amphibious animal. It is no use coming into the center of Africa if we are to live upon snipe and partridges just as if we were in England!"

CHAPTER XXXII

THE FALL

After arriving at Lake Tchad, the "Victoria" met a current which carried it more to the west, some clouds tempered the heat, and occasionally a breeze was felt over

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this vast expanse of water. But, towards one o'clock, the balloon having slanted across this part of the lake, advanced once more inland for a distance of seven or eight miles.

The doctor, who was first annoyed at this direction, did not complain when he perceived the town of Kouka, the celebrated capital of Bornou. He could obtain a bird's-eye view of it, surrounded by walls of white clay; some mosques of considerable size towered above the Arab houses.

In the courts of the houses, and in the public squares were palm trees, and caoutchouc plants, crowned by a dome of foliage 100 feet in extent. Joe remarked that these immense umbrellas were suited to the heat of the sun's rays, and he drew very comfortable conclusions from this dispensation of Providence.

Kouka is really composed of two distinct towns, separated by the "dendal," a wide boulevard of great length, crowded by foot-passengers and horsemen. Upon one side lay the aristocratic quarter of the town, with its high and airy houses; on the other cowered the poorer quarter, a wretched assemblage of low conical huts, where an indigent population dragged on a mere existence—for Kouka is neither commercial nor industrial.

Kennedy found some resemblance to Edinburgh, which was built on a plain, with its two perfectly distinct towns.

But the travelers had scarcely time to observe all these details, when a contrary wind, with the changeableness which characterizes the air-currents in Africa, suddenly laid hold of them and carried the balloon forty miles across Lake Tchad.

There a novel sight awaited them; they were able to count the numerous islets in the lake, inhabited by the Biddiomahs, very notorious and sanguinary pirates, and whose vicinity was as much to be dreaded as that of the Touaregs of the Sahara. These savages bravely prepared to receive the "Victoria" with showers of arrows and stones; but the balloon had soon passed their isles, over which it appeared to hover like a gigantic winged beetle.

At this moment Joe, who was gazing at the horizon, said to Kennedy, "Faith, Mr. Dick, you are always dreaming of shooting. Here is something which will suit you!"

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"What is it, Joe?"

"And this time my master will not object to your firing your gun."

"But what is it?"

"Do you see that flock of large birds over there, which are approaching us?"

"Birds?" said the doctor, seizing his telescope.

"I see them," cried Kennedy. "There are at least a dozen of them."

"Fourteen, if you have no objection," said Joe.

"Please goodness, they are sufficiently mischievous that the tender-hearted Samuel may not object to my shooting some."

"I shall not say a word," said Ferguson, "but I should very much prefer to see them at a greater distance."

"You are afraid of these birds, then?" said Joe.

"They are condors, Joe, and of the largest size, and if they do attack us——"

"Well, we shall defend ourselves, Samuel. We have an arsenal ready to receive them. I do not suppose that these creatures are very formidable."

"Who can tell?" replied the doctor.

Ten minutes afterwards the flock was within range. These fourteen birds filled the air with their hoarse cries. They flew at the "Victoria" more irritated than alarmed by its appearance.

"How they scream," said Joe; "what a fearful row!"

"They probably regard us as intruders upon their domain, and think that we have no business to fly like themselves."

"Truly," replied Kennedy, "they are sufficiently formidable and quite as dangerous as if they were armed with Purdey's guns."

"They have no need of them," replied Ferguson, who had suddenly become very serious.

The condors flew round in wide circles, and their orbits gradually got smaller and smaller. They flashed through the sky with fantastic rapidity, sometimes darting down with the utmost velocity, and breaking their line with sharp angular flights.

The doctor, feeling nervous, resolved to ascend, in order to escape from such a dangerous neighborhood; he in-

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flated the balloon, which mounted at once. But the falcons mounted with him, but little disposed to let him escape.

"They appear determined to have their own way," said Kennedy, taking up a carbine. The birds continued to approach; and more than one came within fifty paces of the car, as if to brave Kennedy's carbine. "I have a great mind to fire up at them," said Kennedy.

"No, Dick; do not, do not make them angry without reason. It would only incite them to attack us."

"But I can soon polish them off!"

"You are mistaken, Dick."

"We have a bullet for each of them?"

"And if they attack the upper part of the balloon how will you reach them? You imagine that you are dealing with lions on land, or with sharks in the open sea. For aëronauts, the situation is very critical."

"Are you serious, Samuel?"

"Quite serious, Dick."

"Let us wait, then."

"Yes; be ready in the event of attack; but do not fire without my orders."

The birds then collected at a little distance; the travelers could distinguish their bare throats extended with the efforts to scream; their gristly heads adorned with violet crests, which bristled with anger. They were of large size, their bodies being more than three feet long, and the under part of their white wings glistened in the sunlight. They have been termed air "sharks," to which fish they bore some resemblance.

"They are following us," said the doctor, as they rose with the balloon. "We have ascended well, and they can fly higher than we can go."

"Well, what is to be done?" asked Kennedy.

The doctor did not answer.

"Listen, Samuel," said Kennedy; "there are fourteen of these birds, and we have seventeen shots at our disposal, if we fire them all. Are there no means by which we can destroy or disperse them. I will account for some of them, I promise you."

"I don't question your skill, Dick, and I willingly look upon those birds as dead which fly across your range; but

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I repeat, if they attack the upper part of the balloon you will not be able to see them, they will tear the silk which keeps us up, and we are 3,000 feet above the ground!"

At this moment one of the fiercest of the birds swooped right down upon the "Victoria," with beak and claws extended, ready to bite and rend.

"Fire!" roared the doctor.

Scarcely had the word passed his lips, when the bird, shot dead, went tumbling into space.

Kennedy seized one of the double-abrrelled guns; Joe shouldered the other.

Frightened by the report, the falcons drew back for an instant, but they returned to the charge almost immediately with increased fury. Kennedy, with one bullet cut the head clean off the nearest bird; Joe broke the wing of another.

"Only eleven more," said he.

But now the birds changed their tactics and simultaneously rose above the "Victoria." Kennedy looked at Ferguson.

The latter, notwithstanding his energy and fortitude, turned pale. There was a moment of terrified silence. Then a rending noise was heard, as when silk is torn, and the car sank beneath the feet of the three travelers.

"We are lost!" cried Ferguson, as he gazed at the barometer, which was rapidly rising. Then he added:

"Throw out the ballast; out with it!"

In a few seconds all the quartz had disappeared.

"We are falling still. Empty the water-tanks, do you hear. We are falling into the lake!"

Joe obeyed. The doctor looked down. The lake appeared to be coming up to meet him, objects became more distinct, the car was not 200 feet from the surface of Lake Tchad.

"The provisions!" cried the doctor, and the case which contained them was hurled into space.

The descent became less rapid, but the unhappy travelers still were falling.

"Throw out more!" cried the doctor for the last time.

"There is nothing left," replied Kennedy.

"Yes," said Joe, laconically; and, with a rapid farewell gesture, he threw himself from the balloon.

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"Joe, Joe!" cried the terrified doctor.

But Joe could no longer hear him. The "Victoria," lightened now, resumed her ascent, and reached a height of 1,000 feet; and the wind whistling through the torn silk covering of the balloon, carried them towards the northern side of the lake.

"He is lost!" cried Kennedy. despairingly.

"Lost to save us!" replied Ferguson.

And these brave men felt big tears rolling down their cheeks. They leaned over the side of the car, in the vain hope to distinguish some trace of the unfortunate Joe; but they were too far away.

"What is to be done now?" asked Kennedy.

"We must descend to earth as soon as we can, Dick, and then wait."

After a run of sixty miles, the "Victoria" descended on a deserted spot at the north end of the lake. The grapnels caught in a low tree, and Kennedy fastened them securely.

Night came on, but neither Ferguson nor Kennedy had a moment's sleep.

CHAPTER XXXIII

KENNEDY'S SPORTING

THE next morning, the 13th of may, the first thing the travelers did was to search the part of the lake border where they were situated. It was a species of island composed of firm land in the midst of an extensive marsh. Around this piece of *terra firma* large reeds grew, as high as average European trees, and extended as far as eye could reach.

These trackless swamps rendered the position of the "Victoria" secure; it was only necessary to explore the lake shore; the immense sheet of water expanded towards the east, and nothing was visible on the horizon—neither islet nor continent was to be seen.

The two friends had not yet ventured to speak of their unfortunate companion. Kennedy was the first to impart his surmises to the doctor.

"Perhaps Joe is not lost, after all," said he. "He is a

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sharp lad and a first-rate swimmer. He had no difficulty in swimming across the Firth of Fourth at Edinburgh. We shall see him again, depend upon it; I cannot say how or when, but do not let us neglect anything that might give him an opportunity to rejoin us."

"Heaven grant it may be as you suggest!" replied the doctor, in a voice choked with emotion. "We will do everything in the world to find our friend. Let us put things to rights at once; and first of all let us take off the exterior covering of the balloon, which will relieve us of 650 lbs. weight, and is surely worth the trouble to get rid of."

The doctor and Kennedy set to work, they overcame the greatest difficulties. It was necessary to tear the tough taffetas away bit by bit, and to cut it into strips to pull it through the meshes of the network. The rent made by the birds' beaks was many feet in length.

This operation occupied at least four hours; but at length the interior balloon, entirely freed, did not appear to have suffered at all. The "Victoria" was now diminished by a fifth. This difference was sufficient to astonish Kennedy.

"Will it carry us?" he asked.

"We need fear nothing on that score," said the doctor; "I will re-establish the equilibrium, and if our poor Joe return, we shall be able to resume our route as usual."

"At the moment he fell, Samuel, if my recollection serve me, we were not far from an island."

"I remember; but this isle, like all those in Lake Tchad, is no doubt inhabited by a race of pirates and murderers. These savages have been witnesses of our accident, and if Joe has fallen into their hands, unless superstition protects him, what will become of him?"

"He is a man of resource, I tell you; I have great confidence in his pluck and intelligence."

"I hope he will prove so. Now, Dick, you can go and shoot in the neighborhood, without going too far, mind. It is absolutely necessary for us to replenish our larder, of which the greater part has been sacrificed."

"All right, Samuel, I shall not be long away."

Kennedy took a double-barrelled gun, and advanced into the giant reeds towards a coppice at no great distance, and

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soon the reports of his gun in quick succession told the doctor that the sportsman was successful.

Meantime, the doctor employed himself in overhauling the remaining contents of the car, and in establishing the equilibrium of the second balloon. There remained thirty pounds of pemmican, some tea and coffee, about a gallon and a half of brandy, an empty water-tank; all the salted meat had disappeared.

The doctor was aware that, by the loss of the hydrogen from the first balloon, his ascensional force was reduced to about 900 lbs. He must, therefore, base his calculations for the establishment of the equilibrium on this difference. The new "Victoria's" "content" was 67,000 feet of gas; the dilating apparatus appeared to be in good order, neither the pile nor the serpentine had received any injury.

The ascensional force of the new balloon was then about 3,000 lbs., and adding the weight of the apparatus, the travelers, and the water, the car and accessories, and putting on board fifty gallons of water, and 100 lbs of fresh meat, the doctor arrived at a total of 2,830 lbs. He could therefore, carry 170 lbs. of ballast for contingencies, and the balloon would then be in equilibrium with the atmospheric air.

His dispositions were made accordingly; he replaced the weight of Joe by ballast. The entire day was occupied in these preparations, and were finished when Kennedy returned. He had had good sport. He brought a quantity of geese, wild ducks, snipe, teal, and plover. He employed himself in preparing the game and smoking it. Each bird was spitted through with a small stick, and suspended above a fire of green wood. When the operation appeared complete, the whole were carefully packed within the car.

Next day the sportsman determined to complete the stock of provisions.

Evening surprised the travelers while still at work.

Their supper consisted of pemmican, biscuits, and tea. Fatigue, having given them appetite, ensured them sleep. Each during his watch peered anxiously into the darkness, sometimes almost fancying they heard the voice of Joe; but, alas! that voice they so desired to hear was far away.

At daybreak the doctor aroused Kennedy.

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"I have been thinking," said he, "what we must do to recover our companion."

"What is your suggestion, Samuel? I agree to everything. Speak."

"First of all, it is important that Joe should have knowledge of our whereabouts."

"Certainly, or he will think we mean to leave him to his fate."

"He! He knows us too well to think that; he would never think of such a thing; but he must be told where we are."

"How?"

"We must take our places in the car and ascend again."

"But if the wind carry us away?"

"Fortunately it will do nothing of the kind. Look, Dick; the wind will bring us back again over the lake, and this, which would have been annoying yesterday, is to-day most propitious. We must therefore direct all our efforts to maintain ourselves above the lake all day. Joe will not fail to see us up there, where he will be anxiously looking for us. Perhaps he will be able to tell us where he is."

"If he be alone, and at liberty, he will certainly do so."

"And if he be a prisoner," replied the doctor, "as the natives do not incarcerate their prisoners, he will see us, and understand the object of our maneuvers."

"But if, after all," said Kennedy, "for we must be prepared for every contingency, if he has left no trace, what can we do?"

"We must endeavor to regain the northern side of the lake, keeping ourselves in view as much as possible. There we will wait, explore the banks, search the edges of the lake, which Joe would certainly endeavor to reach; and we will not leave the neighborhood without making every effort to find him."

"Let us go, then," said Kennedy.

The doctor took the exact bearings of the piece of dry ground they were about to leave; he estimated that, according to the map and his observations, they were to the north of Lake Tchad, between the town of Lari and the village of Ingernini, both of which had been visited by Major Denham. Meantime Kennedy completed the pro-

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visioning of the balloon. In many places he perceived the tracks of rhinoceros, manatees, and hippopotomi, but he never encountered any of these formidable beasts.

At seven in the morning, and not without great difficulty, which poor Joe would have made light of, the grapnel was detached from the tree. The gas was dilated, and the new "Victoria" ascended 200 feet into the air. After some coquetting with the wind, it fell in with a pretty strong current, and sailed over the lake, and was soon progressing at twenty miles an hour.

The doctor steadily maintained an elevation of between 200 and 500 feet. Kennedy often discharged his carbine. The travelers even approached imprudently near to the islands, examining the coppices, the brushwood, the bushes, and every shaded place, in which their late companion could have found shelter, then descended close to the long pirogues which skimmed over the lake. The fishermen on their approach threw themselves into the water, and swam to the island with every demonstration of terror.

"We can discover nothing," said Kennedy, after a search of two hours.

"Patience, Dick; let us not be discouraged, we cannot be very distant from the scene of the accident."

At eleven o'clock the "Victoria" had made ninety miles; it then encountered a new current, which carried it at almost right angles to its previous course for sixty miles towards the east. It hovered over a large and thickly-inhabited island, which the doctor pronounced to be Fanam, the capital of the Biddiomahs. They were in hopes to see Joe rise out of each bush, escaping and calling to them for assistance. If free, they could have taken him up without any difficulty; if a prisoner, they must put the same plan in practice to rescue him as they had for the missionary's release. He would soon have rejoined his friends, but nothing appeared, nothing was stirring. They were beginning to despair.

At half-past two the "Victoria" came in sight of Tangalia, a village situated upon the eastern side of the Tchad, and which was the extreme point attained by Denham in his expedition.

The doctor became uneasy at this persistent direction of the wind. He felt he was being driven towards the east,

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pushed back into the center of Africa, towards the trackless deserts.

"We must halt," said he, "and come down to the earth; for Joe's sake, before everything, we must return above the lake; but first we must find a current in the opposite direction."

For a quarter of an hour they searched at different altitudes. The "Victoria" always drifted over the land. But fortunately, at 1,000 feet, a very violent wind carried them to the northwest.

It was scarcely possible that Joe had remained on one of the islands, else he would have found some means to make his presence known. Perhaps he had reached *terra firma*. Thus the doctor reasoned when he regained the north side of the lake.

As to fancy Joe drowned was ridiculous. A terrible idea had occurred to both Kennedy and Ferguson, viz., the number of alligators existing in these places. But neither had the courage to give vent to their supposition. At length it was impossible not to refer to the ever-present thought, and the doctor said boldly:

"Crocodiles are only met with upon the banks or islands of the lake. Joe has skill enough to avoid them; besides, they are not dangerous, and the Africans bathe fearlessly and with impunity."

Kennedy did not reply; he preferred silence to the discussion of such a terrible eventuality.

The doctor perceived the town of Lari about five o'clock in the afternoon. The inhabitants were gathering their cotton crops before their huts of plaited straw, in the midst of their own well-kept enclosures. This assemblage of fifty houses occupied a small depression in the valley, which extended between the bases of the mountains. The violence of the wind carried the doctor too far, but it again changed, and he descended at the exact point of departure in the little island of hard ground where they had passed the previous night. The grapnel, instead of being fastened to a tree, was secured to the reeds mixed with the thick mud of the marsh, which gave a good holding ground. The doctor had considerable trouble to control the balloon, but at length the wind fell and the two friends kept watch together, almost despairing.

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CHAPTER XXXIV.

LOSS OF AN ANCHOR

At 3 A. M. the wind rose to a hurricane, and blew with such violence that the "Victoria" could not remain at anchor without danger; the reeds beat upon the silk and threatened to tear it in pieces.

"We must be off, Dick," said the doctor. "We cannot stay here under these circumstances."

"But Joe, Samuel?"

"I shall certainly not abandon him; and if the storm carries us 100 miles to the north, I shall return here; but at present we are endangering the safety of all."

"Going without him, then?" said the Scot, with despairing tone.

"Do you not believe that my heart is as heavy as your own, and that I am only yielding to dire necessity?"

"I am at your orders," replied Kennedy. "Let us go."

But the departure involved great difficulties. The grapnel, which had sunk deeply, resisted all their efforts, and the balloon, dragging it, fastened it still tighter. Kennedy could not disengage it; besides, in their position, such an attempt, if successful, would have been very dangerous, for the "Victoria" might have taken flight before Kennedy could have rejoined her.

The doctor, who did not wish to run such a risk, made the Scot enter the car, and determined to cut the rope. The "Victoria" bounded 300 feet into the air, and made directly towards the north. Ferguson was obliged to yield to the storm. He folded his arms and remained absorbed in his own sad reflections. After some minutes he turned towards Kennedy, who was equally taciturn, and said, "We have been tempting Providence, perhaps. It scarcely seems man's province to undertake such a journey." And a deep sigh escaped him.

"But a few days ago," replied Kennedy, "we were congratulating ourselves at having so well escaped danger; we were shaking hands all round."

"Poor Joe, what an excellent disposition he possessed, and a brave and honest heart! At one time dazzled by his riches, but he willingly sacrificed his treasure. He is now far away from us, and the wind still hurries along with irresistible violence!"

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"Let us see, Samuel; admitting that he has found refuge among the lake tribes, cannot he do as other travelers have done—like Denham and Barth? They came home safely."

"My dear Dick, Joe does not know a word of the language—he is alone and without means. The travelers of whom you speak never advanced without sending the chiefs numerous presents with an escort armed and prepared for these expeditions. And even then they did not escape hardships and sufferings of the worst kind. What, then, do you think, can have become of our unfortunate companion? It is horrible to think of, and this is one of the greatest troubles I have ever had to deplore."

"But we shall go back again, Samuel?"

"We shall, of course, Dick. We will abandon the 'Victoria,' if it be necessary, to regain Lake Tchad on foot, and communicate with the Sultan of Bornou. The Arabs cannot have retained a bad opinion of the first Europeans."

"I will follow you, Samuel," replied Kennedy, with energy; "you may depend upon me. We will rather relinquish the object of our journey—Joe is devoted to us—we will sacrifice ourselves for him."

This resolution gave fresh courage to those brave men. They felt strong in the same purpose. Ferguson did all in his power to drift into a current which might take him back to the Tchad, but that was then impossible, and it was impracticable to descend upon such a deserted ground and in such a storm.

Thus the "Victoria" crossed the country of the Tibbons. It passed over Belad and Djérid, a thorny desert, which forms the boundary of the Soudan, and reaches to the sandy deserts marked by the long track of caravans; the last line of vegetation is soon mingled with the sky on the southern horizon, not far from the principal oases of this region, whose fifty wells are shaded by most magnificent trees. But the balloon could not stop. An Arab encampment, with their striped tents, and their camels stretched upon the sand, gave life to the scene, but the "Victoria" passed away like a meteor, and accomplished a distance of sixty miles in three hours, without Ferguson having any command over this headlong flight.

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"We cannot stop, we cannot descend," he said; "there is not a tree to be seen, not a mound; we are about to pass over the Sahara. Surely Heaven is against us."

He spoke thus with the energy of despair, when he perceived in the north the sands of the desert whirled up in the midst of a blinding dust, and gyrating under the influence of opposing currents.

In the midst of this whirlwind—scattered, and broken, and overturned—was a caravan, which was disappearing in this avalanche of sand; the camels, hurrying hither and thither, uttered lamentable sounds—the cries and shouts ascended from this suffocating sand-fog. Sometimes a striped garment would display its bright colors in the chaos, and the roaring of the tempest added to this scene of destruction.

The sand quickly fell into dense masses, and there, where but lately stretched a level plain, was now a mound, still moving, the immense tomb of the buried caravan.

The doctor and Kennedy turned pale at the sight, they could not manage the balloon, which turned round and round in the contrary currents, and would not obey the expansion or contraction of the gas.

Caught in these eddies of air the "Victoria" whirled about giddily, the car oscillated fearfully, the instruments suspended in the tent were shaken almost to pieces, the tubes of the serpentine bent as though they would break. The travelers were deafened, and they were obliged to hold tightly to the cordage to keep their positions during the fury of the storm. Kennedy, with hair disheveled, sat still, and did not speak a word. The doctor had resumed his old courage at the approach of danger, and no trace of his emotion was now apparent, not even when, after a last somersault, the "Victoria" suddenly was left in an unexpected calm, the wind from the north seized it and drove it back upon the course it had been taking since the morning, and at an equally rapid pace.

"Where are we going?" cried Kennedy.

"Where Providence wills, my dear Dick. I was wrong to doubt whatever happens is for the best, and we are now returning towards the places we never hoped to see again."

The ground so flat, so level, when they first passed over

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it, now appeared like the waves after a storm; a series of small mounds jotted the desert; the wind blew stiffly, and the "Victoria" flew into space.

The direction now taken by the balloon was slightly different from that followed in the morning; so at about nine o'clock, instead of finding themselves on the borders of Lake Tchad, they saw that the desert extended before them. Kennedy observed this.

"It does not much matter," replied the doctor; "the important point is to get down south; we shall there come upon the towns of Boarnou, Woaddie, or Kouka, and I shall not hesitate to stop there."

"If you are satisfied, I am," replied Kennedy, "but Heaven grant that we may not be obliged to cross the desert, like those unfortunate Arabs. That was a fearful sight."

Dick frequently referred to this. The crossing of the desert includes all the dangers of the ocean, even the chances of being swallowed up in its depths, and, moreover, unbearable fatigue and privations.

"It appears to me," said Kennedy, "that the wind is less violent, the dust is less thick, the sand-waves are less high, and the horizon is clearing."

"So much the better; we will scan it carefully with our glasses, and no point shall escape us."

"I will take that duty, Samuel, and when the first tree appears you shall be told at once." And Kennedy, telescope in hand, placed himself in the front of the car.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE ISLE OF BIDDIOMAHS

WHAT had become of Joe during the vain search made for him by his master?

When he fell into the lake his first act, after rising to the surface, was to cast his eyes upwards; he saw the "Victoria" already above the water, mounting fast; little by little it diminished, and soon, meeting with a rapid current, disappeared in the north. His master and his friend were saved.

"It was a very happy idea of mine to throw myself into

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the Tchad," said Joe to himself. "Mr. Kennedy would have done the same if he had thought of it, for it is only natural that one man should sacrifice himself to save two others. That is mathematical.—Q. E. D.!"

Reassured upon this point, Joe began to consider his position; he was in the midst of an immense lake, surrounded by unknown, and probably savage, tribes. All the more reason then for him to get out of the scrape, and to trust no one but himself; he was then no longer afraid.

Before the attack by the birds of prey, which, according to him, had conducted themselves like true condors, he had noticed an island on the horizon. He now resolved to make for it, and determined to put in practice all his knowledge of swimming, after he had got rid of part of his clothing. He did not trouble himself about a little swim of five or six miles; so, while he was in the open lake, he thought of nothing but of swimming straight and vigorously.

At the end of an hour and a half the distance between him and the island was much less. But as he approached the land, a thought at first fugitive, and then more definite, weighed upon his mind. He knew that the banks were frequented by enormous alligators, and he was aware of their voracity. So ready was the brave lad to believe everything in the world was "natural," that he did not feel very much moved; he feared that white flesh was particularly tasteful to crocodiles, and he advanced with extreme caution, with eyes strained to watch.

He was not more than 100 yards from the shadowy bank, when a smell of musk pervaded the air around him.

"Ha!" he muttered; "as I feared, the alligator is not far off."

He dived at once, but not sufficiently to avoid the contact of an immense body, whose scaly skin scraped him as it passed. He gave himself up for lost, and began to swim with desperate energy. He came to the surface, took breath, and again dived. He endured a quarter of an hour of poignant agony which all his philosophy was unable to overcome, and fancied he heard behind him the noise of the immense jaws ready to snap him up. He was swimming then as quietly as possible to land, when he was seized by one arm, and then around the waist.

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Poor Joe, he gave a last thought to his master, and began to fight desperately, but felt himself drawn, not towards the bottom of the lake, as crocodiles have the habit of doing to devour their prey, but to the surface. Scarcely had he drawn breath and opened his eyes, than he perceived two negroes, of an ebony hue; these Africans held him tightly and uttered strange cries.

"Hollo!" cried Joe. "Niggers instead of crocodiles. Faith, I prefer the former. But how do these fellows dare to bathe in such places as this?"

Joe forgot that the inhabitants of the islands on the lake, like all black people, can bathe with impunity in water swarming with alligators without heeding them. The amphibious inhabitants of this lake have a great reputation for being inoffensive saurians.

But Joe was only "out of the frying-pan into the fire." He determined to wait the issue of events, and as he could not do otherwise, he permitted himself to be conducted to the bank without displaying any fear.

"Evidently," thought he, "these people have seen the 'Victoria' skimming the lake like an aërial monster; they have been distant witnesses of my fall, and they cannot but feel respect for a man who has fallen from Heaven. Let them go on."

Joe was reflecting thus when he was landed in the midst of a shouting crowd of both sexes and all ages, but not of every color. He was with a tribe of Biddiomahs of a splendid black tint. There was no reason for him to blush, even at the lightness of his clothing; he was in "deshabille," the latest fashion of the country.

But ere he had time to take in all the situation he could not mistake the adoration of which he became the object.

This fact did not reassure him, when the affair of Kazeh recurred to his memory.

"I see that I am about to become a god—a son of the Moon perhaps. Well, that will do as well as any other when there is no choice. What is necessary is to gain time. If the 'Victoria' happens to pass, I will profit by my new position to give my worshipers a view of a miraculous apotheosis."

While Joe was thus reflecting the crowd was assembling round him; they prostrated themselves, they shouted, they

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touched him, even became familiar; but at last they had the forethought to offer him a splendid feast, composed of sour milk with rice, pounded up with honey. The lad, who took everything as it came, made one of the best meals he had ever enjoyed in his life, and gave the people some idea of the fashion in which gods eat on great occasions.

When evening arrived the sorceress took Joe respectfully by the hand and conducted him to a kind of hut surrounded by "charms"; before entering he cast an anxious glance upon the heaps of bones which were piled up around this sanctuary; he had, however, plenty of time to reflect upon his position after he was locked in.

During the evening and a part of the night he heard the songs of the feasting multitude, the noise of a species of drum and of old iron pots, very sweet to the African ear; the choruses were shouted as accompaniment to interminable dances, which enclosed the cabin in their mazes.

Joe heard this deafening clamor through the mud and reed-lined walls of the hut. Perhaps, in other circumstances, he might have taken an interest in these strange ceremonies, but his mind was disturbed by unpleasant forebodings. Looking even at the bright side of things, it was sad and depressing to be lost amongst a savage people. Few travelers who had ventured so far as this had ever returned. Moreover, could he pride himself upon the worship already accorded him. He had good reason to distrust human grandeur, and asked himself whether, in that region, worship was not only a preparation for being devoured.

Notwithstanding this doleful prospect, after some hours devoted to reflection, fatigue overcame him, and Joe fell into a deep sleep, which would, doubtless, have continued till daylight if an unexpected dampness of the earth had not awakened him.

He soon perceived that the water was rising, and so quickly that it soon reached his waist.

"What can this be?" said he; "an inundation—a water-spout—a new mode of sacrifice? By Jove! I shall wait no longer, it will soon be up to my neck." As he spoke, he burst through the wall by a vigorous application of his shoulder, and found himself—where?—in the open lake!

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"Rather a bad sort of country for the owners," said Joe, as he again set out swimming vigorously. One of those phenomena by no means unfrequent in Lake Tchad had released the brave lad. More than one island has completely disappeared which had seemed to possess the solidity of rock, and the tribes on the banks of the lake are obliged to rescue the unfortunate inhabitants who have escaped.

Joe was not aware of this peculiarity, but he did not fail to profit by it. He perceived a boat drifting about, and rapidly secured it. It appeared hollowed out from the trunk of a tree. A pair of paddles were fortunately in it, and Joe, profiting by a rapid current, let himself drift.

"Let me see where I am," he said. "The polar star, which is honestly doing his duty in pointing out the route to the north, will assist me."

He remembered with satisfaction that the current was bearing him towards the north end of Lake Tchad, and he let it do so. About two in the morning he landed upon a promontory, covered with reeds, which were very troublesome, even to his philosophy, but a tree seemed to be growing for the express purpose of offering him a bed amid its leaves. Joe twined himself in the branches, and, without daring to sleep, awaited the first rays of morning.

The day broke with the suddenness usual in equatorial regions. Joe threw a comprehensive view around and over the tree in which he had passed the night. The branches were literally covered with serpents and chameleons—the leaves were hidden beneath their folds—a tree of quite a new species to produce such reptiles. Under the influence of the sun's rays they began to crawl about and twist in all directions. Joe experienced a sharp terror, mingled with disgust, and jumped from the tree amid the hissings of the snakes.

"That is a thing that no one would credit," thought he.

He did not know that the last letters of Doctor Vogel had announced this peculiarity of the banks of the Tchad, where the reptiles are more numerous than in any other country. After this experience, Joe determined to travel with more circumspection for the future, and turning towards the sun, he then struck out to the northeast. He took good care to avoid cabins, huts, or caves, and, in a

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word, any place that might serve as shelter for any human being. How often did he look up at the sky! He hoped to see the "Victoria," and though he had vainly sought her all the day, that did not diminish his confidence in his master; he must have had great firmness of character to accept the situation so philosophically. Hunger now began to unite with fatigue, for a diet of roots, the marrow of the arbutus, from which "melé" is made, or the fruit of the trees do not refresh a man; and yet, according to his estimate, he had traversed a thousand miles to the west. His body bore the marks of the thorns and prickly reeds, through which he had pushed his way, and his wounded and bleeding feet rendered his progress very painful. But still he could fight against his sufferings, and, as evening set in, he determined to pass the night on the borders of the lake.

There he had to submit to the bites of myriads of insects. Flies, mosquitoes, ants, half an inch long, swarmed around him. At the end of two hours Joe had not a rag of clothing left, the insects had devoured everything. This was a terrible night, which brought no sleep to the weary traveler. All this time the boars, the wild oxen, the ajorib, a sort of rhinoceros and equally dangerous, raged in the copses and beneath the waters of the lake. This concert of wild beasts was kept up into the middle of the night. Joe did not dare to move. His determination and patience scarcely held out under such circumstances.

At length day dawned. Joe rose hurriedly, and judge of his horror when he perceived that he had unwittingly shared his bed with an enormous frog, about five inches broad, a monstrous disgusting reptile, which kept staring at Joe with its great round eyes. Joe felt his heart beat, and distaste lending him strength, he ran away as hard as he could and plunged into the lake. This bath assuaged the itching that tormented him, and having munched some leaves, he resumed his route with an obstinacy and persistence for which he could not account; he was no longer conscious of his actions, but, nevertheless, he was aware of the existence of a power within him superior to despair.

Now the pangs of hunger began to assail him, and he was obliged to tie a band of weed around his body. Fortunately his thirst could be quenched at every step, and

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while recalling the sufferings of the desert, he found some consolation in not having to endure that terrible experience.

"What can have become of the 'Victoria?'" thought he. "The wind is from the north. It might return to the lake. Without doubt Mr. Samuel has gone to establish the equilibrium anew, but yesterday was sufficient for that; it is not, then, impossible that to-day—— But I must act as if I were never likely to see him again. After all, if I do reach one of those great towns on the lake I shall only be in the same position as those great travelers of whom master has spoken. Why should I not do as well as they? They have returned—some of them! why, the devil—— Well, courage!"

As he was thinking thus and pressing onward, Joe fell amongst a troop of savages in a wood. He stopped in time, and was not seen by them. The negroes were engaged in poisoning their arrows with the juice of the euphorbia, an important proceeding in these countries, and almost rising to the dignity of a religious ceremony.

Joe stood still and held his breath, and hid in the midst of a brake, when rising before him, seen through an opening in the leaves, he perceived the "Victoria,"—the "Victoria" herself—directing her course towards the lake, scarcely 100 feet above him. It was impossible to make himself heard—impossible for the occupants to see him.

Tears came into his eyes, not of despair, but of recognition. His master was searching for him, he had not been abandoned. He was obliged to await the departure of the negroes; he could then leave his retreat and run across to the border of the lake.

But the "Victoria" soon disappeared in the distance. Joe resolved to wait its return, for it would surely come again. It did actually pass, but more to the east. Joe ran, gesticulated, shouted, all in vain. A violent wind hurried her away.

For the first time, energy and hope failed Joe. He thought he was lost; he believed his master had gone never to return. He did not wish to reflect—he did not dare.

Completely overcome, with bleeding feet and wounded limbs, he plodded on during the whole of that day and a part of the night. He dragged himself on his way, some-

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times on his hands and knees. He already foresaw the moment his strength would fail him, and when he must die!

As he proceeded, he suddenly found himself opposite a marsh—or rather, to that which he felt very soon was a marsh, for the night was very dark. He fell unexpectedly into the thick mud, and, notwithstanding his struggles and a desperate resistance, he felt himself sink by degrees into this miry ground; some minutes later he was engulfed up to his waist. "Death is here at last," he said; "and such a death!"

He fought despairingly, but all his efforts only served to plunge him more deeply into the grave which the unhappy man believed to be his own. Not a fragment of wood to support him, not a reed to hold to. He fancied it was all over. His eyes closed. "Master, master, save me!" he cried.

And this despairing cry, already almost stifled, and to which no echo replied, lost itself in the thick darkness of the night.

CHAPTER XXXVI

TAKEN UP FLYING

SINCE Kennedy had taken up his post of observation in front of the balloon, he had not ceased to search the horizon attentively. After some time he turned towards the doctor and said, "If I be not mistaken, there is a troop of horsemen moving over there—I cannot distinguish them yet. At any rate they are disturbed, for they are raising a cloud of dust."

"May it not be a contrary wind?" said Samuel; "a current which may carry us to the north?" And he got up to examine the horizon.

"I do not think that, Samuel," replied Kennedy; "it is a herd of gazelles, or wild oxen."

"Perhaps, Dick, but the gathering is at least nine or ten miles off; and, for my part, even with the telescope, I can make nothing of them."

"Well, I shall not lose sight of them, there is something extraordinary going on which interests me, it is something

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like the movements of cavalry. Ha! I was not mistaken, they are horsemen—look!"

The doctor scanned the group attentively.

"I believe you are right," said he. "It is a detachment of Arabs from Tibbous; they are flying in the same direction as we, but we are going faster, and will easily overtake them. In half an hour we shall be within sight, and be able to determine upon our course of action."

Kennedy had again seized the glass, and was attentively studying the group. They had become more visible; some of them were separated from the others.

"It is evident," replied Kennedy, "that it is some maneuver being executed, or it is a hunt. They seem to be chasing something. I should like to know what it is."

"Patience, Dick, we shall soon have come up with them, and even passed them, if they continue to keep the same course. We are going at twenty miles an hour, and no horse can keep up such a pace as that."

Kennedy resumed his scrutiny, and some minutes afterwards he said:

"These Arabs are going at top speed—I can distinguish them perfectly. There are about fifty of them—I see their bournous flying in the wind. It is cavalry exercise, their chief is a hundred paces in front, and they are after him."

"Whatever they may be, we need not fear them; and, if necessary, I can ascend."

"Wait—wait a moment, Samuel!"

"This is very odd," added Dick, after examining the troop anew; "there is something that I do not understand. In their headlong speed and the irregularity of their formation these Arabs have rather the appearance of pursuers than followers."

"Are you sure of that, Dick?"

"It is certain; I am not mistaken. It is a chase, but a man-chase. It is not their chief they are pursuing, after all; it is a fugitive."

"A fugitive!" said Samuel, with emotion.

"Yes."

"We must not lose sight of them—but wait."

They quickly gained upon the troop, which was going, nevertheless, at a great pace.

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"Samuel, Samuel!" cried Kennedy, in a tremulous voice.

"What is it, Dick?"

"Is it a dream—is it possible?"

"What?"

"Wait a second;" and the Scot rapidly arranged the glasses and looked again.

"Well," said the doctor.

"'Tis he, Samuel!"

"He!" exclaimed the latter. They both said "he," there was no necessity to name him.

"'Tis he on horseback, and scarcely a hundred paces in advance of his enemies. He is flying from them."

"It is Joe, indeed," said the doctor, growing pale.

"He cannot see us in his flight," said Kennedy.

"He shall very soon see us, then," said the doctor, lowering the flame of the blow-pipe.

"How?"

"In five minutes we shall be within fifty feet of the ground, in fifteen close above him."

"I had better fire a shot to attract his attention."

"No, he cannot retrace his steps; he is cut off."

"What is to be done then?"

"Wait."

"Wait! with those Arabs there?"

"We shall catch them! We shall pass them! We are only two miles distant, and provided Joe's horse holds out."

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed Kennedy.

"What is it?"

Kennedy had uttered a cry of despair at beholding Joe thrown to the ground. His horse, evidently exhausted and worn out, fell beneath him.

"He sees us!" cried the doctor; "he raised his arm as a signal to us."

"But the Arabs will take him! what is he waiting for! Ah! the brave fellow! Hurrah!" cried Dick, who could no longer contain himself.

Joe had immediately jumped up after his fall, and at the moment when one of the foremost horsemen came riding down upon him, he bounded up like a panther, avoided his blow by a step aside, threw himself upon the horse, seized the Arab by the throat in his muscular hands, and strangled

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him, threw him upon the sand, and continued his headlong course.

A simultaneous shout from the Arabs rent the air, but, occupied in their pursuit, they had not observed the "Victoria" 500 paces behind them, and only thirty feet above the ground. They were now within twenty lengths of the fugitive.

One of them nearly approached Joe, and was about to thrust his lance into his body, when Kennedy, with firm eye and steady hand, stopped him neatly with a bullet, and he rolled on the plain.

Joe did not even turn round at the report.

A portion of the troop halted, and fell on their faces in the dust before the "Victoria," the remainder continued the pursuit.

"But what is Joe about? why doesn't he stop?"

"He knows better than to do that, Dick. I understand him. He keeps going in the same direction as the balloon. He depends upon us. Brave lad! We will take him out of the very jaws of these Arabs. We are only fifty paces off."

"What must be done?" asked Kennedy.

"Put your gun aside."

"There it is," said the Scot, as he laid it down.

"Can you hold 500 lbs. of ballast in your arms?"

"More than that."

"No, that will be sufficient."

And the bags of sand were then piled up by the doctor upon Kennedy's arms.

"Now wait at the back of the car, and be ready to throw all that ballast out at once. But, for your very life, do not do so till I tell you."

"All right."

"Without that we cannot help Joe, and he will be lost."

"You may depend upon me."

The "Victoria" was flying almost above the troop of horsemen who were riding with loose reins after Joe. The doctor in the front of the car held the ladder extended, ready to launch it at the proper moment. Joe still kept about fifty feet ahead of his pursuers. The "Victoria" passed them.

"Attention!" cried Samuel to Kennedy.

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"I am ready."

"Joe, look out!" cried the doctor in a ringing voice, as he threw down the ladder, whose lowest round dragged up the dust as they fell.

At the doctor's summons, Joe, without checking his horse, turned round. The ladder was close to him, and in a moment he had caught it.

"Throw out the ballast!" roared the doctor.

"Done," replied Kennedy; and the "Victoria," lightened by a weight more than that of Joe, rose 150 feet into the air.

Joe held on tightly to the ladder during its tremendous oscillations; then, making an indescribable gesture to the Arabs, and climbing up with the agility of a clown, he arrived at the car, where his companions received him in their arms. The Arabs uttered yells of surprise and rage when they perceived the "Victoria" bearing away the fugitive, and rapidly increasing her distance.

"Master—Mr. Dick!" Joe had said, and, yielding to emotion and fatigue, he had fainted, while Kennedy, with delirious joy, cried out "Saved—saved!"

"Well—yes!" said the doctor, who had regained his usual impassibility.

Joe was almost naked, his arms bleeding and his body covered with wounds; all these told of his sufferings. The doctor dressed his hurts and laid him down in the tent.

Joe soon regained consciousness, and asked for a glass of brandy, which the doctor did not refuse, Joe not being a person to be treated like an ordinary individual. After drinking it he shook hands with his two companions, and declared himself ready to relate his adventures.

But they would not permit him to speak, and the brave lad fell into a sound sleep, of which he was in great need.

The "Victoria" then took an oblique course towards the west. In consequence of a strong wind, it arrived at the confines of the thorny desert above the palm trees, bent and torn by the tempest, and after having completed a journey of 200 miles since Joe had been received on board again, it passed the tenth degree of longitude towards evening.

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CHAPTER XXXVII

A NIGHT NEAR AGHADES

THE wind dropped during the night, and the "Victoria" remained quietly at the summit of a large sycamore; the doctor and Kennedy watched in turn, and Joe profited by this arrangement to sleep soundly and uninterruptedly for twenty-four hours.

"That is what he wanted to set him up," said Ferguson; "Nature has taken upon herself to cure him."

At daylight the wind again blew pretty strongly, but in gusts: it first came from the north, then from the south; but at length the "Victoria" was driven to the westward.

The doctor, map in hand, noted the kingdom of Damaghou, an undulating region of wonderful fertility, with its villages built of long reeds, entwined with branches of the asclepia; corn ricks were raised up in the small cultivated fields upon little platforms, to preserve them from the attacks of mice and ants. The balloon soon reached the town of Zinder, recognizable by its vast square used for executions—in the center of which is the "death-tree." At the foot of this tree the executioner watches, and whosoever passes beneath its shade is immediately hanged.

On consulting the barometer, Kennedy could not help saying: "Why, we are going towards the north!"

"What does that matter? If we get to Timbuctoo we shall have no reason to complain. Never has a happier journey been accomplished under more pleasant circumstances."

"Nor in better health," said Joe, who just then popped his cheery face between the curtains of the awning.

"Here is our brave friend," cried Kennedy; "our preserver. How do you feel now?"

"Much as usual, Mr. Dick, much as usual, thank you, and as well as ever. There is nothing to set a man up like a little pleasant traveling after a bath in Lake Tchad; is it not so, sir?"

"You are indeed a noble fellow," replied Ferguson, as he shook Joe by the hand. "What anxiety and fear you have caused us!"

"Well, and you too. Can you believe that I was easy about you? You can boast of having given me a fine fright."

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"We shall never understand each other, Joe, if you take things in that way."

"I see that his fall has not changed him a bit," said Kennedy.

"Your devotion has been sublime, my lad; you have saved us, for had the 'Victoria' fallen into the lake, nothing could have extricated her."

"But if my devotion, as you are pleased to call my somersault, has preserved you, have you not also saved me? Since here we are, all three in good health, consequently we have none of us any reason to reproach each other, after all."

"The fellow is just as impossible as ever he was," said the Scot.

"The best way to understand each other," said Joe, "is not to talk about it. What is done, is done. Good or bad, it can never be recalled."

"Mad as ever," said the doctor, laughing. "At least, will you tell us your adventures?"

"If you really desire it. But first I must get this plump goose ready for cooking, for I perceive that Mr. Dick has not been idle lately."

"Do as you say, Joe."

"Well, then we shall see how African game suits the European stomach." The goose was quickly grilled over the flame of the blow-pipe and soon afterwards eaten. Joe took his share like a man who had eaten nothing for many days. After the usual tea and grog he related his adventures. He spoke with visible emotion, while he looked the incidents in the face with his habitual philosophy.

The doctor could not refrain from pressing him by the hand frequently when he perceived that the faithful servant had been more concerned about his master's safety than his own; and referring to the phenomenon in the isle of the Biddiomahs, the doctor explained its frequent occurrence on Lake Tchad.

At length Joe, continuing his recital, reached the time, when, plunged in the marsh, he uttered that despairing cry for assistance. "I believed myself lost, sir," he said, "and my thoughts went forth to you. I began to struggle to rise, how, I will not tell you. I had decided not to be swallowed up without an effort, when at two paces from me I per-

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ceived the end of a newly-severed cord. I made a last attempt, and by good luck reached the cable. I pulled, it resisted. I hauled myself along it, and finally reached *terra firma.* At the other end of the cord was an anchor."

"Ah, sir, I have indeed the right to call it the Anchor of Hope. I recognized an anchor of the 'Victoria.' You had, then landed at this place. I followed the direction of the cord which told me your route and after much exertion I drew myself out of the slough. I recovered my strength with my courage, and I walked during part of the night away from the lake. I arrived at length on the border of an immense forest. There, in an enclosure, some horses were feeding, unaware of my approach. There are some moments when everyone can ride, is it not so? I did not lose time in reflecting. I jumped on the back of one of the animals, and we were soon flying towards the north with great speed. I will not tell you about the towns I did not see, nor the villages which I avoided. No. I crossed cultivated fields, I cleared the bushes, I leaped palisades, I pushed my horse to his speed. I got excited, my spirits rose. I reached the border of the desert. Good; that suited me. I could see before me more plainly. Hoping always to catch sight of the 'Victoria' waiting for me. But no! About three hours after I fell in, like a fool, with an Arab encampment. Ah, what a chase that was! You see, Mr. Kennedy, a hunter never knows what a hunt is till he has been chased himself; and if you will take my advice do not try it. My horse fell from fatigue, the Arabs were close upon me, I tumbled down, but soon jumped behind an Arab horseman. I did not intend it, and I hope he bears me no malice for having throttled him. But I had seen you —you know the rest. The 'Victoria' followed me closely, and you picked me up flying like a knight, playing at the quintain and bearing off the ring. Was I not right to depend upon you, eh, Mr. Samuel? So that was easy enough Nothing is more natural. I am ready to begin again if you will be in any way benefited; and so, as I said, sir, it is not worth speaking about."

"My brave Joe," replied the doctor, with emotion, "we were not wrong in trusting to your intelligence and pluck."

"Bah! sir, one has only to follow events, and you will

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be all right. The surest way is to take whatever comes as it comes."

During Joe's narrative, the balloon had rapidly passed over a large extent of country. Kennedy remarked a collection of huts on the horizon, and the doctor, referring to the map, declared that it was the small town of Tagelel, in the Damerghou.

"Here," he said, "we shall strike Barth's route. Here he left his two companions, Richardson and Overweg. The first followed the route to Zanzibar, the second to Maradi; and you recollect that Barth was the only one who returned to Europe."

"Thus," said the Scot, tracing the course of the "Victoria" on the map, "we are going to the north."

"Due north, my dear Dick."

"And are you not disturbed by so doing?"

"Why?"

"That direction leads to Tripoli and the Great Desert."

"Oh! we shall not go so far, my friend; at least, I hope not."

"But where do you expect to stop?"

"Well, Dick, have you no curiosity to visit Timbuctoo?"

"Timbuctoo!"

"Certainly," replied Joe, "it would be absurd to come upon a journey to Africa without seeing Timbuctoo!"

"You will then be the fifth or sixth European who has visited this mysterious town."

"Let us go to Timbuctoo."

"Then we must get between the 17th and 18th degrees of latitude, and there find a favorable breeze to carry us to the west."

"Good," replied Kennedy, "but have we not still a long journey to make to the north?"

"About 150 miles."

"In that case," said Kennedy, "I shall get a little sleep."

"Do you also sleep, sir," said Joe to the doctor, "you have need of repose, for I have given you an immense amount of watching."

Kennedy lay down in the tent, but the doctor, who was little affected by fatigue, remained at his post.

After about three hours the "Victoria" was passing very rapidly over a stony tract of land with high mountains of

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granitic formation. Some isolated peaks were 4,000 feet high. Giraffes, antelopes, and ostriches, bounded with surprising agility amongst the acacias, mimosas, "sonahs," and date-trees. After the sterility of the desert, vegetation was regaining the upper-hand. It was the country of the Kailouas, who conceal their faces by a cotton bandage like their dangerous neighbors, the Touaregs.

At ten o'clock at night, after a splendid "run" of 250 miles, the "Victoria" halted above an important town. By the moonlight they could perceive that it was half in ruins, some of the mosques were interlaced here and there with broad bands of white light. The doctor made an observation by the stars, and found he was within the latitude of Aghades.

This town, formerly a great commercial center, had already fallen into ruins at the time Doctor Barth visited it.

The "Victoria," unperceived, took the ground two miles beyond Aghades, in a large field of millet. The night was quiet, and day broke at five o'clock, when a gentle wind began to impel the balloon towards the west and even a little southwards. Ferguson was very anxious to profit by this good fortune. He rose rapidly and fled away along the extended beams of the rising sun.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

RAPID TRAVELING

THE 17th of May passed quietly and without incident. The desert was again encountered, a moderate wind impelled the "Victoria" to the southwest, it deviated neither to the right nor left, and its shadow was traced in a direct line upon the sand.

Before his last departure the doctor had taken care to replenish his store of water. He was afraid of not being able to obtain water in those countries infested by the Touaregs. The plain, about 1,800 feet above the level of the sea, depressed towards the south. The travelers having crossed the route from Aghades to Mourzouk frequented by caravans, arrived in the evening in 16° lat. and 4° 55′ long., having had a long and monotonous journey of 180 miles. During that day Joe cooked the last head of game, which

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was very summarily prepared. He sent up a most appetizing little supper of *frochette* of snipe. The wind being favorable, the doctor resolved to continue his journey by night, as the full moon was shining brightly. The "Victoria" rose to 500 feet, and during this night journey of about 60 miles, an infant's slumber would not have been disturbed.

On Sunday there was another change in the wind, viz., to the northwest. Some ravens were perceived, and further off a flock of vultures, who fortunately kept aloof.

The sight of these birds induced Joe to compliment his master upon his idea of two balloons.

"Where should we be now," said he, "if we had had but one envelope? This second balloon is like a ship's launch; in case of shipwreck, one can always take to it for safety."

"You are right, my friend, only my launch makes me a little nervous, it is not like the ship."

"What do you mean?" asked Kennedy.

"I say that the new 'Victoria' is not up to the old one. Whether the tissues have been stretched, or whether the gutta-percha is melted with heat of the serpentine, I am aware of a certain escape of gas. This is not much matter at present, but it is appreciable; we have a tendency to fall, and to keep us up I am obliged to dilate the hydrogen to a greater extent."

"Whew!" cried Kennedy, "I don't see any remedy for that!"

"There is none, my dear Dick. That is the reason we are pressing on, and even at night."

"Are we far from the coast?" asked Joe.

"What coast, my lad? We cannot tell where chance may lead us; all I can say is, that Timbuctoo is 400 miles to the west."

"And what time shall we take to get there?"

"If the wind do not drop, I expect to see the town on Tuesday afternoon."

"Then," said Joe, pointing out a long train of men and beasts on the plain, "we shall arrive before that caravan!"

Ferguson and Kennedy leaned over, and saw a vast multitude; there were more than 150 camels of the kind which, for twelve golden "mutkals," march from Timbuctoo to Tafilet, with a load of 500 lbs.

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These camels of the Touaregs are of the best breed. They can travel from three to seven days without water, and for two days without food; their speed excels that of horses, and they obey the commands of the "khatir," or leader of the caravan. They are known in the country by the name of "Mehari."

Such were the details furnished by the doctor, while his companions were studying this multitude of men, women, and children, traveling over the yielding sand with difficulty. The wind effaced their traces almost as soon as they had passed.

Joe asked how it was that the Arabs succeeded in guiding themselves in the desert, and reaching the wells so sparsely scattered throughout the immense solitudes.

"The Arabs," replied Ferguson, "have naturally a wonderful instinct for finding their way—where a European would be entirely puzzled an Arab would not hesitate; a small stone, a pebble, a tuft of grass, a shadow, the difference in the sand, will suffice for their safe direction. During the night they guide themselves by the polar star; they do not travel more than two miles an hour, and rest during the great heat of the day; so you can calculate what time they take to traverse the Sahara, a desert more than 900 miles long."

The "Victoria" had by this time disappeared from the wondering gaze of the Arabs, who envied her her rapid progress. In the evening the three travelers came to long. 2° 20′, and during the night they made more than another degree.

On Monday the weather changed completely. It rained tremendously. They were obliged to put up waterproof to resist this deluge, and the consequent increase of weight in the balloon and the car. This continual rain accounted for the marshes and swamps, which spread over the surface of the country. Here vegetation reappeared, with mimosas, baobabs, and tamarinds.

Such was Souray, with its villages roofed in the shape of Arminian caps. There were few mountains, but hills sufficient to make ravines and reservoirs, over which the guinea-fowl and snipe skimmed; here and there an impetuous torrent crossed the road. The natives crossed these by passing hand over hand from one branch to another of the over-

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hanging trees. The forests now gave place to jungles, in which sported the alligator, hippopotamus, and rhinoceros.

"It will not be long before we see the Niger," said the doctor, "the country usually alters in the neighborhood of large rivers. These moving roads, as they have been rightly termed, first brought vegetation, and subsequently civilization. Thus in its course of 2,500 miles, the Niger has sprinkled on its banks the largest cities in Africa.

"Ah!" said Joe, "that reminds me of the story of the great admirer of Providence, who extolled the great care which had sent rivers flowing through great cities!"

At mid-day, the "Victoria" passed over a small town of wretched-looking huts, called Gao, which had been formerly a celebrated capital.

"'Twas here," said the doctor, "that Barth crossed the Niger on his return to Timbuctoo. This was a famous stream in old days—the rival of the Nile, to which Pagan superstition gave celestial origin. Like the Nile, it has occupied the attention of travelers for ages, and like it, also, has claimed numerous victims."

The Niger, with a wide stream, ran with great rapidity southwards; but the travelers, carried along, as they were, could scarcely note its curious windings.

"I wish to speak about this river," said Ferguson; "it is already at some distance. Under the names of Dhiouleba, Mayo, Egghirreon, Quorra, and others, it flows through an enormous tract of country, and rivals the Nile in length. All its titles signify simply 'The River,' according to the language of the region through which it flows."

"Has Doctor Barth followed this route?" asked Kennedy.

"No, Dick; when he departed from Lake Tchad he visited the chief towns of Bornou, and crossed the Niger at Say, four degrees below Gao. He then penetrated into the midst of the unexplored region enclosed by the bend of the Niger, and after eight months of unheard-of suffering, he arrived at Timbuctoo, where we shall be in three days if the wind lasts like this."

"Has the source of the Niger been discovered?" asked Joe.

"Long ago," replied the doctor. "The discovery of the Niger and its affluents attracted numerous expeditions,

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of which I can mention the principal ones. From 1749 to 1758 Adamson surveyed the river and visited Goree. From 1785 to 1788, Goldberry and Geoffroy penetrated the deserts of the Senegambia and ascended as far as the Maures country, where Saugnier, Brisson, Adam, Riley, Cochelet, and many others were murdered. Then there was the celebrated Mungo Park, the friend of Walter Scott, and a Scot likewise. Sent out by the African Society of London, in 1795, he reached Bambarra and the Niger, marched 500 miles with a slave dealer, discovered the Gambia river, and returned to England in 1797. On the 30th January, 1805, he started again with Anderson, his brother-in-law, Scott, the draughtsman, and thirty-five soldiers, revisited the Niger on the 19th August, but by that time, owing to fatigue, privation, ill-treatment, bad weather, and an unhealthy country, only eleven out of forty Europeans remained alive. On the 16th November the last letters of Mungo Park reached his wife, and a year later they learnt, through a merchant, that the unfortunate traveler, having reached Boussa on the Niger, on the 23rd December, his boat was upset in the rapids, and that he had been murdered by the natives.

"And did not his sad fate deter others?"

"On the contrary, Dick, for then they had not only to explore the river but to find the travelers' papers. In the year 1816, an expedition was organized in London, in which Major Gray took part, which arrived at Senegal, penetrated into Fonta Djallon, visited the Foullahs and Manduignes, and returned to England without having achieved anything further. In 1822, Major Laing explored all the western part of Africa, bordering upon the British possessions, and it was he who first reached the sources of the Niger, and according to his report the source of this immense river is only two feet wide!"

"All the easier to jump over!" said Joe.

"Yes, easy enough," replied the doctor. "If we can credit tradition though, whoever attempts to jump over this source is immediately swallowed up in the act, and whoever wishes to draw water there is pushed away by an invisible hand."

"I suppose we needn't believe all that unless we like?" said Joe.

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"Just as you please. Five years later Major Laing journeyed across the Sahara and penetrated up to Timbuctoo, and was strangled some miles beyond it by the Oulad-Shiman, who wanted to become a Mussulman."

"Another victim!" said Kennedy.

"Then a brave young fellow undertook, with his limited resources, and actually succeeded in making the most wonderful of modern journeys. I refer to the Frenchman, René Caillé. After frequent trials in 1819 and 1824, he set out anew upon the 19th April, 1827, from Rio Nunez; on the 3rd August he arrived at Timé, so completely exhausted, that he could not resume his journey for six months. He then joined a caravan, and protected by his oriental costume, reached the Niger on the 10th March, entered the town of Jeuné, took boat on the river and descended it as far as Timbuctoo, where he arrived on the 30th April.

"Another Frenchman, Imbert, in the year 1670, and an Englishman, Robert Adams, in 1810 had perhaps beheld this curious town; but René Caillé is entitled to the credit of being the first European who brought back authentic reports. On the 4th May he left that queen of the desert; on the 9th, he visited the very place where Major Laing had been killed; on the 19th, he arrived at El-Eraouan, and left that flourishing town to cross, amid a thousand dangers, the vast solitudes included between the Soudan and the northern regions of Africa. At length he reached Tangier, and on the 28th September he embarked for Toulon. So, in nineteen months, notwithstanding one hundred and ninety days of sickness, he had crossed Africa from west to north. Ah! if Caillé had been born in England he would have been honored as the greatest traveler of modern times—as the equal of Mungo Park. But in France he is not sufficiently appreciated."

"He was a brave fellow. What became of him?" asked Kennedy.

"He died at the age of thirty-nine, worn out by fatigue. It was thought reward sufficient to award him the prize of the Geographical Society in 1828; the greatest honor would have been paid him in England. Finally, while he was occupied in this wonderful journey, an Englishman started on the same enterprise, with as much courage, but not the same good fortune. This was Captain Clapperton,

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the companion of Denham. In 1829, he entered Africa by the west, at the Gulf of Benin; he took up the traces of Mungo Park and Laing, found in Boussa the documents relating to the death of the former traveler, and arrived at Sackatou on the 20th of August, where he was kept a prisoner, and subsequently died in the arms of his faithful follower, Richard Lander.

"And what became of this Lander?" asked Joe, who was much interested.

"He regained the coast and returned to England, bringing with him the captain's papers, and an exact account of his travels. He then offered his services to the Government to complete the survey of the Niger. His brother John joined him, and these two, from 1829 to 1831, redescended the Niger from Boirssa nearly to its mouth, describing it village by village, and mile after mile."

"Then these brothers escaped the usual fate?" said Kennedy.

"Yes, for the time at least, but in 1833 Richard undertook a third journey to the Niger, and was killed by an unknown hand close to the mouth of the river. So you see, my friends, that this country which we are traversing has witnessed noble acts of devotion, which have but too often met with their reward in death!"

CHAPTER XXXIX
TIMBUCTOO

DURING the monotony of the journey on Monday, Doctor Ferguson took pleasure in giving his companions many details respecting the country they were passing over. The flat ground offered no obstacle to their progress. The only care the doctor had was caused by the northeast wind, which blew strongly, and carried them away from Timbuctoo.

The Niger, having turned towards the north as far as that town, curves roundly, and falls into the Atlantic in a great stream. In the bend the country is very varied—sometimes of luxurious fertility, sometimes of great barrenness—uncultivated plains succeed fields of maize, which, in their turn, are followed by vast heath-covered tracts.

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All kinds of aquatic birds, pelicans, teal, kingfishers, live in hundreds on the borders of the torrents and pools. A Touareg camp appeared from time to time, in which the women did the work and milked their camels and smoked like so many chimneys.

The "Victoria," at eight o'clock P. M., had got more than 200 miles to the west, and the travelers were then witnesses to a magnificent sight. Some of the moon's rays were bursting through the clouds, and glinting among the raindrops, fell upon the chain of Mount Hombori. Nothing could be more strange than those crests of basaltic appearance. Their profiles stood out in fantastic outlines against the cloudy sky—they might be likened to the legendary ruins of a town of the middle ages, or, as in dark nights, the icebergs of the Frozen Ocean appear to the astonished beholder.

"There is a site for the 'Mysteries of Udolpho,'" said the doctor; "Mrs. Radcliffe could not have depicted these mountains under a more terrible aspect."

"Faith," replied Joe, "I should not care to walk at night alone in this ghostly country. If it were not so heavy we might carry all this place into Scotland. It would do very well on the border of Loch Lomond, and tourists would rush in hundreds to see it."

"Our balloon is not large enough to admit of your idea being carried into execution. But it seems to me that our direction is changing. All right; the sprites of the place are rather amiable in sending us a breeze from the southeast, and putting us in a proper direction."

In fact the "Victoria" then resumed her route more to the north, and on the morning of the 20th it passed above the network of canals, torrents, and rivers, a concatenation of the tributaries of the Niger. Many of these canals were covered by thick grass like prairie grass. Here the doctor found out Barth's route when he embarked to descend to Timbuctoo. Of great breadth, at this point the Niger flows between its banks rich with crucifers and tamarinds; gazelles bounded away in troops, plunging their long curled horns into the high grasses, where the alligators lay watching silently for their prey.

Long files of asses and camels, loaded with goods from Jeuné, were forcing their way under the thick trees. An

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amphitheater of small houses appeared at the bend of the river; on the roofs and terraces was collected all the provender received from the neighboring districts.

"There is Kabra," cried the doctor, joyfully. "It is the port of Timbuctoo, the town is not five miles distant."

"Are you satisfied now, sir?" asked Joe.

"Delighted, my lad."

"So much the better," said Joe.

In two hours, the "Queen of the Desert," the mysterious Timbuctoo—which at one time possessed, like Rome and Athens, its professors and philosophers—unfolded itself before the travelers' eyes.

Ferguson perceived that Barth's plan of it was correct in its minutest detail. The town describes a vast triangle upon a plain of white sand. The apex is towards the north. There is nothing in the neighborhood but a little grass, some mimosas, and stunted trees.

As for the appearance of Timbuctoo, its streets were narrow, and bordered with one-storied houses made of bricks, and huts of straw and reeds; the former of a conical shape, the latter square. Over the terraces some of the inhabitants were lazily extended, robed in gaudy colors, lance or musket in hand.

No women, however, were visible at that hour.

"But it is said they are beautiful," added the doctor. "Do you see the three towers of the three mosques, which are all that are left of a great number. The town is much divested of its former splendor. At the apex of the triangle rises the Mosque of Sankore, with its ranges of galleries supported by arcades of a very pure style. Further on is the quarter of Saua Gungu, the mosque of Sidi Yahia, and some two-storied houses. There are no palaces nor monuments. The sheik is only a trader, and his residence, a shop."

"It appears to me," said Kennedy, "that there are some broken ramparts."

"They were destroyed by the Foullanes in 1826, when the town was larger by a third; for Timbuctoo, from the eleventh century, was an object coveted generally, and belonged successively to the Touaregs, to the Sourayens, to the Marocuins, and Foullanes; and this great center of

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civilization, where a *savant* named Ahmed Baba possessed, in the sixteenth century, a library of 1,600 manuscripts, is now nothing but a warehouse for the commerce of Central Africa.

The town appears to be given up to carelessness; it is impregnated with the supineness which is epidemic with decaying cities. Great heaps of rubbish were piled up in the outskirts, and these, with the market hill, formed the only undulations of the ground.

As the "Victoria" passed by there was some little movement; the drums were beaten, but scarcely had the last learned man had time to observe this novel phenomenon when the travelers, impelled by the wind from the desert, were wafted along the river, and Timbuctoo was nothing more than a souvenir of their rapid journey.

"Now," said the doctor, "Heaven may guide us where it pleases."

"Provided it be towards the west," replied Kennedy.

"Well," said Joe, "if it should happen to us to be sent back the way we have come, and to cross the ocean to America, that would not trouble me."

"We must first have the power to do so, Joe."

"And how is that wanting?"

"Gas, my boy, gas. The ascensional force of the balloon is sensibly diminishing; and we shall have to use great care to reach the coast. I shall even be compelled to throw out ballast. We are too heavy."

"Such are the results of doing nothing, sir. By lying here all day, like a sluggard, in a hammock, we get fat and heavy. It is a lazy journey; and when we return we shall find ourselves very stout."

"These are remarks worthy of Joe," replied Kennedy. "But wait until the end: how do you know what Heaven has in store for us? We are still a long way from the termination of our journey. Where do you expect to touch the coast, Samuel?"

"I should be puzzled to answer, Dick; we are at the mercy of variable winds, but I shall consider it fortunate if we reach Sierra Leone or Portendick. We may meet friends in those neighborhoods."

"And glad to shake hands with them; but are we following the desired route?"

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"Scarcely, Dick; look at the compass; we are tending south towards the sources of the Niger."

"We shall have a capital opportunity to discover them then, if they have not been already explored," said Joe. "Is it the etiquette not to find any more of them?"

"No, Joe; but be easy. I hope not to go so far."

At nightfall the doctor threw out the last sacks of ballast. The "Victoria" rose; the blow-pipe, although in full action, could scarcely maintain her. She was then at sixty miles to the south of Timbuctoo, and next day saw the travelers on the borders of the Niger, not far from Lake Debo.

CHAPTER XL

STILL TO THE SOUTH

THE course of the river was divided by large islands, and in those narrow branches it ran with a swift current. On one of these islets some shepherds' huts were erected, but it was impossible to take the exact bearings, for the speed of the "Victoria" kept increasing. Unfortunately it inclined more to the south, and very soon passed over Lake Debo.

Ferguson sought for other currents at different elevations, but in vain. So he abandoned the attempt, which had still more diminished the gas, as the dilation pressed it against the failing envelope of the balloon.

He said nothing, but began to feel very uneasy. The obstinate wind blowing to the south had overturned all his calculations. He did not know what to think. If he did not reach English or French territory, what would become of them in the midst of the barbarians infesting the coast of Guinea? How could they obtain a vessel to take them thence to England? And the actual direction of the wind was hurrying them towards the kingdom of Dahomey, amongst the most savage tribes, at the mercy of a king who, at public displays, sacrifices thousands of human victims. There they would be lost.

On the other hand, the balloon was rapidly falling, and the doctor felt it. However, the weather cleared a little, and he hoped that the termination of the rain would bring about a change in the atmospheric currents.

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He was disagreeably reminded of the circumstance by Joe saying:

"Well, the rain is heavy enough, but this time there is going to be a deluge, if we may judge by the cloud now approaching us."

"Another cloud!" said Ferguson.

"A regular big fellow this time," replied Kennedy.

"I have never seen such a one," replied Joe; "it seems to have been laid out with rule and line."

"I can breathe again," replied the doctor, putting down the telescope. "It is not a cloud after all."

"What?" exclaimed Joe.

"No, it is a swarm——"

"Well?"

"A swarm of locusts."

"That a swarm of locusts?"

"Yes, of millions of locusts, which pass over the ground like a waterspout, and very unfortunately for the district, for if they alight it will be devastated."

"I should like to see that."

"Just wait a little, Joe; in ten minutes we shall have met the cloud, and then you can judge for yourself."

Ferguson was right; this thick cloud, extending for many miles, came upon them with a deafening noise, casting an immense shadow on the ground. It proved to be an innumerable host of those grasshoppers known as field-crickets. At a hundred paces from the "Victoria" they alighted upon a green expanse; a quarter of an hour later the mass again took flight, and the travelers could then perceive that the trees and bushes were completely stripped —the fields looked as if they had been mown. Not even a severe winter could do more damage.

"Well, Joe?"

"Well, sir, it is extraordinary, but quite natural. Though the locust is small, the numbers make him important."

"It is a terrible calamity—worse than hail in its effects," said Kennedy.

"And it is impossible to guard against them," said Ferguson. "The natives sometimes have conceived the idea of burning the forests, even the crops, in order to arrest the flight of these insects; but the leading files flew

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into the flames and actually extinguished them by mere force of numbers, so that the rest passed in safety. Happily, in these countries, there is a compensation for their ravages—the natives catch and eat them with avidity."

"They are the shrimps of the air, which," said Joe, "as an experience, I regret not having tasted."

The country became more swampy as they proceeded; the forest gave place to isolated miles of trees; upon the banks of the river they perceived some tobacco plantations, and marshes thick with grass. On a large island was the town of Jeuné, with the two towers of its mosque built of mud, which gave harbor to hundreds of swallows, whose nests exhaled a most unpleasant smell. The tops of trees appeared between the houses, and even during the night the town seemed very busy. Jeuné is really a very industrious town, and furnishes Timbuctoo with all its needs; its boats and its caravans transport thither the various productions of its industry.

"If it would not have prolonged our journey too much," said the doctor, "I should have made an attempt to descend in this town. We might see more than one Arab who had traveled to France or England, and who is not unacquainted with our method of locomotion. But it would not be prudent."

"We can call again during our next excursion," said Joe, laughing.

"Besides," continued the doctor, "if I do not mistake, the wind has a tendency to blow from the east. We cannot afford to lose such a chance."

The doctor threw overboard some useless articles—empty bottles, and an old preserved meat box—he thus succeeded in raising the "Victoria" into a zone more suitable for his plans. At 4 A. M. the first rays of the sun lighted up Sego, the capital of Bambara, easily to be known by the four towns composing it, its Moorish mosques, and the continual movement of the ferry-boats used in transporting the occupants to the various quarters. But the travelers were not more seen than they themselves saw, and fled rapidly and directly to the northwest, as the doctor's fears calmed down by degrees.

"Two days more in this direction, and at this pace, will see us at the Senegal River," said he.

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"In a friendly country?" asked Kennedy.

"Not altogether; at a pinch, if the 'Victoria' fail us, we must gain some French settlement. But if we can hold on for a couple of hundred miles, we shall arrive at the east coast comfortably."

"And that will be the end of it," said Joe. "So much the worse. If it were not for the telling of it, I should never wish to put foot on earth again. Do you think people will believe us, sir?"

"Who knows, my brave Joe? However, there is one indisputable fact. Thousands of people witnessed our departure from one side of Africa, and thousands will see us descend on the other."

"In that case it will be difficult to doubt our having crossed the continent."

"Ah, sir," replied Joe, with a deep sigh, "I shall often regret that golden ore. Look what weight it would have given to our narratives. A grain of gold for each auditor, I should have had a pretty big crowd to listen to and even to admire me."

CHAPTER XLI

HIGH MOUNTAINS

On the 27th of May, at 9 A. M., the country presented a new aspect. The long slopes rose into hills which promised mountains. It was necessary to cross the chain which separated the basins of the Niger and Senegal, and determine the fall of the waters to the Gulf of Guinea or Cape Verd.

As far as Senegal the country is reported as dangerous. Doctor Ferguson knew that, from the reports of his predecessors—they had suffered a thousand privations and encountered a thousand dangers amongst these barbarians. The deadly climate carried off the majority of Mungo Park's companions. Ferguson was therefore more than ever decided not to set foot upon this inhospitable soil.

But he had not a moment's rest. The "Victoria" was settling down in a most unmistakable manner. It became necessary to throw out a number of articles more or less

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useless, and particularly when there was a mountain to be cleared.

This continued for more than 120 miles; they got tired of ascending and descending. The balloon, like the stone of Sisyphus, kept falling back continually. The contour of the balloon already was losing its roundness, and the wind hollowed out large "pockets" in its loose covering.

Kennedy could not help remarking this.

"Is there a hole in the balloon?" he asked.

"No," replied the doctor; "but the gutta-percha has evidently become softened by the heat, and the hydrogen escapes."

"How can we prevent that?"

"It is impossible to do so. Let us lighten the balloon; it is our only way. Throw out all we can spare."

"But what?" asked the Scot, looking round the half-denuded car.

"The tent—it is very heavy."

Joe, whom this order concerned, mounted above the ring which fastened the cords to the netting, and quickly detached the thick curtains and threw them down.

"There is a treat for a whole tribe of negroes," he said. "There is sufficient to clothe a million of them; they are very sparing of the material."

The balloon rose a little, but it soon became evident that it again was approaching the ground.

"Let us descend, and see if we cannot repair the envelope," said Kennedy.

"I tell you, Dick, we have no means to repair it."

"Well, what are you going to do?"

"We will sacrifice everything not absolutely indispensable. I wish at all cost to avoid a halt in these regions. The forests we skimmed just now are nothing but dens."

"What, of lions or hyenas?" asked Joe.

"Worse than that—of men, and the most cruel men in Africa."

"How do you know that?"

"From travelers who have preceded us; then the French who occupy the colony of Senegal, have had dealings with the neighboring tribes. Under Colonel Faidherbe a reconnaissance was made into the country; officers, such as Pascal, Vincent, and Lambert, have brought back the pre-

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cious documents of their expeditions. They explored the country formed by the bend of the Senegal, where war and pillage have left only ruin."

"How did it come to pass?"

"This way. In 1854, a marabout, of Fouta, named Al-Hadji, said he was inspired by Mahomet, and incited all the tribes to war against the infidels, viz., the Europeans. He carried desolation and destruction between the Senegal and its affluent the Falune. Three bands of fanatics, guided by him, marched through the country with fire and sword. He even advanced into the valley of the Niger to the town of Sego, which was threatened for a long time. In 1857 he went up northwards and invested Fort Medina, built by the French on the banks of the river. This place was defended by a hero, Paul Holl, who for many months, without food or supplies, held out till Colonel Faidherbe came to his rescue. Then Al-Hadji and his band repassed the Senegal and returned into Koarta to continue their rapine and murder. Now this is the country to which he has fled with his troops of bandits, and I assure you I would rather not fall into their hands."

"We shall not do so," said Joe, "if we have to sacrifice our boots to lighten the 'Victoria.'"

"We are not far from the river," said the doctor; "but I foresee our balloon will not carry us even so far."

"If we arrive on the banks, that will be something," said Kennedy.

"That is what we must try to do," said the doctor; "but one thing worries me."

"What is that?"

"We have to cross some mountains, and that will be a difficult operation, since I cannot increase the ascensional force of the balloon, even by the greatest possible heat."

"Wait," said Kennedy, "we shall see."

"Poor 'Victoria!'" said Joe. "I am as attached to it as a sailor to his ship, and I shall not leave it without regret. It is not what it was at the outset, certainly; but then we need not speak evil of it. It has done us excellent service, and it will break my heart to abandon it."

"Rest assured, Joe, if we do abandon it, it will be against our will. It will serve us to the best of its ability. I only ask for twenty-four hours longer."

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"It is exhausted," said Joe, looking at it carefully; "it is 'done up,' its life has departed. Poor balloon!"

"If I mistake not," said Kennedy, "I can see the mountains of which you spoke, Samuel."

"Those are they, no doubt," said the doctor, having examined them with his glass. "They appear to me to be very high; we shall have some trouble to clear them."

"Cannot we avoid them?"

"I do not think so, Dick; look at the extent of them, nearly half the horizon."

"They seem to enclose us on all sides," said Joe.

"We must cross over them," said the doctor.

These dangerous obstacles appeared to approach with extreme rapidity, or rather the "Victoria" approached them, and she must ascend at any risk.

"Empty our water-cask," said Ferguson, "we have enough for to-day."

"It is done," said Joe.

"Is the balloon relieved at all?" inquired Kennedy.

"A little, about fifty feet higher," replied the doctor, who did not take his eyes from the barometer, "but that is not sufficient."

The peaks now appeared ready to fall upon the travelers, who were very far from the tops. The water for the blow-pipe was then thrown out, they only kept a few pints, but this was still insufficient.

"We must pass them," said the doctor.

"Throw out the chests, they are empty," said Kennedy.

"Out with them."

"There they go," said Joe, "it is to die by inches."

"As for you, Joe, don't you attempt to repeat your devoted act of the other day. Whatever happens, swear you will not leave us!"

"All right, sir, we will not separate."

The "Victoria" had regained a good height, but the mountain peak still overlooked her. It was a straight edge, which terminated in a regular peaked rampart. It was then more than 200 feet above the travelers.

"In ten minutes our car will be in contact with those rocks if we cannot pass them."

"Well, then, Mr. Samuel," said Joe.

"Keep only the pemmican, throw out all the rest."

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The balloon was again lightened by about fifty pounds, it rose sensibly, but not far, and not above the mountains. The situation was terrible. The "Victoria" was going at a great rate, and the expected shock they knew would break her to pieces.

The doctor looked round the car. It was almost empty.

"If necessary, Dick, you must throw the guns out."

"Sacrifice my rifles!" exclaimed the Scot.

"My friend, if I ask you, it will only be when absolutely necessary.

"Samuel!"

"The arms and ammunition may cost us our lives."

"We are close now," cried Joe.

"Ten fathoms!"

The mountain was then ten fathoms higher than the "Victoria."

Joe took the rugs, and the boxes of ammunition, and, without telling Kennedy, threw them over.

The balloon rose and passed the dreaded peak, the silk caught the sun's rays overhead, but the car was still below the rocks, against which it must inevitably be broken.

"Kennedy, Kennedy!" cried the doctor, "throw out the arms, or we are lost."

"Wait, Mr. Dick," said Joe, "wait a moment!" And Kennedy, turning round, saw him disappear over the side of the car.

"Joe! Joe!" he cried.

"Unhappy man!" exclaimed the doctor.

The top of the mountain was at this place about twenty feet wide, and the other side was less steep. The car arrived at the edge of this plateau, and glided along upon the pebbles, which were ground beneath it.

"We are passing—we are passing—we have passed!" cried a voice which made Ferguson's heart bound.

The brave Joe was holding on by his hands to the bottom of the car and ran along the summit of the mountain, thus relieving the balloon of his weight; but he was obliged to hold very tightly, for the balloon was inclined to escape him.

When he reached the opposite side, and the precipice opened before him, Joe, by a vigorous effort, raised him-

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self up, and, clutching the cordage, remounted beside his companions.

"It was not more difficult than that," he said.

"My brave Joe—my friend!" exclaimed the doctor, with emotion.

"It was not for you I did it," said Joe, "it was for Mr. Dick's rifle. I have owed him something ever since that affair with the Arab. I like to pay my debts, and now we are quits," added he, handing the sportsman his favorite gun. "I should have been very sorry to have seen you separated."

Kennedy shook him warmly by the hand without speaking.

The "Victoria" had only to descend, which was not difficult. It was soon within 200 feet of the ground and in equilibrium. The earth showed traces of convulsion, and presented many hillocks very difficult to avoid at night with a balloon not under control. Night fell rapidly, and, notwithstanding his objections, the doctor was constrained to halt till morning.

"We will search for a favorable place," said he.

"Ah," replied Kennedy, "you have decided at last?"

"Yes. I have been thinking of a plan which I am about to put into execution. It is only six o'clock. We have plenty of time. Throw out the grapnels, Joe."

Joe obeyed, and the two anchors hung suspended from the car.

"I can see a vast forest," said the doctor, "we shall run above it, and make fast to some tree. I would not consent to pass the night on the ground for anything."

"Why cannot we descend?" asked Kennedy.

"For what reason? I repeat it would be dangerous to separate. Besides, I require your aid in a difficult operation."

The "Victoria" skimmed the tops of the trees, and did not fail to "pull up" quickly; the anchors had caught, the wind fell as evening advanced, and the balloon remained almost motionless above the vast extent of foliage formed by the tops of the forest of sycamores.

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CHAPTER XLII
A LAST SACRIFICE

DOCTOR FERGUSON ascertained his position by the observation of the stars, and found that he was scarcely twenty-five miles from the Senegal.

"All that we can do, my friends," said he, pointing to the map, "is to cross the river; but as there are no boats we must cross it in the balloon, and for that purpose we must lighten it still more."

"But I do not see how we can," replied Kennedy, who was anxious on the score of his guns, "unless one of us decides to sacrifice himself and remain behind; and as it is my turn, I claim that honor."

"Why," cried Joe, "is it not my place?"

"It is not a case of throwing yourself down, my friend," said Kennedy; "but to gain the coast of Africa on foot; now I am a good walker, a sportsman."

"I will never agree to that," said Joe.

"Your generous contention is useless, my brave friends," said Ferguson. "I trust we shall not be put to such straits; besides, in case of necessity we must not separate at all; we must cross the country together."

"Be it so," said Joe, "a little walk will do us good."

"But first," said the doctor, "we must do our utmost to lighten the 'Victoria.'"

"By what means?" asked Kennedy. "I am curious to know."

"We must throw away the dilating apparatus, the Buntzen pile, and the coil; in that there is nearly 900 lbs. weight to drag with us."

"But, Samuel, how then shall you obtain the expansion of the gas?"

"I shall not obtain it. We must do without."

"But——"

"Listen to me, my friends. I have calculated to a nicety what ascensional force is left in the balloon. It is sufficient to carry us with the few articles still remaining; we weigh scarcely 500 lbs., including those two grapnels, which I wish to keep."

"My dear Samuel," replied the Scot, "you are more competent than we in such cases—you are the best judge. Tell us what we ought to do, and we will do it."

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"I am of course at your orders, sir."

"I repeat, my friends, grave though the decision may be, we must sacrifice our apparatus."

"Let us sacrifice it," said Kennedy.

"Let us go to work, then," said Joe.

It was by no means an easy matter, it was necessary to remove the apparatus piece by piece. First the "mixing" chest was got up—then the blow-pipe, and at last the chest in which the decomposition of the water took place. It required the united strength of the travelers to remove the recipients from the bottom of the car in which they were firmly let in; but Kennedy was so powerful, Joe so skillful, and Ferguson so ingenious, that they succeeded at last. The various pieces were successively thrown overboard, and they disappeared, making large fissures in the foliage of the sycamores.

"The negroes will be considerably astonished," said Joe, "at seeing such articles in the woods; they will very likely make idols of them."

At last they were obliged to remove the pipes fastened in the balloon, and which had been attached to the serpentine. Joe cut the joints of the india-rubber some feet above the car, but as to the pipes it was more difficult, for they were fixed at the upper end by brass wire to the rings of the safety-valve itself.

It was at this juncture that Joe displayed his skill; with bare feet, so as not to tear the envelope, he ascended by the netting, and, notwithstanding the oscillation, climbed up to the top of the balloon. There, after much difficulty, holding by one hand to the slippery surface, he detached the screws which fastened the pipes. They were then easily taken down through the lower part of the balloon and the apertures hermetically fastened up. The "Victoria," thus relieved of a considerable weight, rose in the air and tugged hard at the anchors.

At midnight this work was successfully accomplished, with much labor, however. A hasty repast was eaten, consisting of pemmican and cold grog, for the doctor had no heat to put at Joe's disposal.

Joe and Kennedy were overcome with fatigue.

"Lie down and sleep, my friends," said Ferguson. "I will take the first watch. At two o'clock I will wake Ken-

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nedy; at four Kennedy will wake Joe; at six we shall be off, and may Heaven guard us through this last day!"

Without saying anything, the doctor's two companions lay down at the bottom of the car and slept profoundly.

The night was calm; some clouds passed over the moon, whose rays at that time scarce broke the obscurity. Ferguson, leaning against the car, looked about in all directions; he steadily watched the dark carpet of foliage which lay spread beneath and intercepted his view of the ground. The least noise appeared to him suspicious, and he sought for reasons for even a trembling of the leaves. He was in that over-excited state of mind which solitude renders more nevous, and in which all kinds of vague terrors arise.

At the termination of a similar journey, having overcome all obstacles, at the moment of success, fears are so strong, emotions so great, that the point of arrival seems to disappear altogether.

Besides, the situation offered nothing reassuring in the midst of a barbarous country, and with means of transport which, in fact, might fail at any moment. The doctor did not rely absolutely upon his balloon, the time had passed in which he could maneuver it fearlessly.

With these impressions upon him the doctor believed he could hear vague murmurs in that vast forest, and fancied he perceived a fire rapidly flitting between the trees. He kept his gaze fixed, and leveled his night-glass in the same direction, but nothing appeared, and the silence was most profound.

Ferguson had doubtless been under a delusion, he listened without hearing the slightest sound. The period of his watch having now expired, he woke Kennedy, enjoined upon him the utmost vigilance, and lay down beside Joe, who was sleeping soundly.

Kennedy lit his pipe and rubbed his eyes, which he could scarcely keep open. He leaned his elbows upon the corner of the car, and smoked vigorously to keep himself awake.

The most absolute silence reigned around, a gentle breeze moved the tops of the trees, and swayed the car in a most sleep-inviting manner, which Kennedy could scarce resist. He struggled against the feeling, opened his eye-

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lids, looked steadily into the darkness with lack-luster eyes, and at length yielding to fatigue he fell asleep.

How long was he thus? He could not tell when he woke, for he was suddenly disturbed by an unexpected crackling.

He rubbed his eyes and jumped up. An intense heat scorched his face. The forest was in flames.

"Fire, fire!" he cried, scarcely understanding what had happened.

His two companions got up.

"What is the matter?" asked Ferguson.

"Fire!" cried Joe. "But who——"

At this moment yells arose beneath the burning trees.

"Ah! the savages," cried Joe, "they have fired the forest to burn us, no doubt."

"The Talibas, the marabouts of Al-Hadji, depend upon it," said the doctor.

The "Victoria" was regularly surrounded by fire, the crackling of the dead wood was mingled with the hissing of the green branches, twining plants, leaves, all the living vegetation was embraced in the destructive element. On all sides an ocean of flame only was visible. Great trees stood out against the glow with their branches covered with burning embers. This burning mass was reflected upon the clouds, and the travelers appeared enveloped in a globe of fire.

"Let us fly!" cried Kennedy; "let us get out! it is our only chance of safety."

But Ferguson stopped him with a firm hand, and with a trenchant blow he severed the grapnel-ropes. The flames, leaping up towards the balloon, were already licking its sides, but the "Victoria," freed from its bonds, rose more than 1,000 feet into the air.

Horrible yells resounded through the forest, mingled with the loud reports of firearms, but the balloon, wafted by a current which had arisen with daybreak, continued her journey towards the west.

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CHAPTER XLIII
A WASTED COUNTRY

"If we had not taken the precaution to lighten the balloon last night," said the doctor, "we should have been lost past recovery."

"That shows the benefit of doing things in time," said Joe, "so we have escaped, and nothing is more natural."

"We are not out of danger yet," replied Ferguson in a cautious manner.

"What do you fear now?" asked Dick; "the 'Victoria' cannot descend without your permission, and when it should do so."

"When it should do so!—look!"

The border of the forest was passed, and the travelers could descry about thirty horsemen clothed in wide trousers, and bournous floating in the air. Some were armed with lances, others with long muskets. They pursued the "Victoria," which was going along slowly, at a hand-gallop.

At sight of the travelers they raised savage cries and brandished their weapons—their anger and menaces were to be read in their sunburnt faces, rendered more ferocious by the short but bristling beard. They passed easily over the low plains and gentle declivities that descend to the Senegal.

"They are indeed the cruel Talibas," said the doctor, "the ferocious marabouts of Al-Hadji. I would rather be in a forest in the midst of wild beasts, than in the hands of those men."

"They have not the most amiable appearance, certainly," said Kennedy, "and they are powerful fellows too."

"Happily, the ruffians cannot fly; there is always some consolation," said Joe.

"Do you see those ruined villages, those burned houses? that is their handiwork; and where at one time were cultivated pastures, they have now left nothing but sterility and devastation."

"At any rate, they cannot touch us here," said Kennedy, "and if we can put the river between us, we shall be safe."

"Quite so, Dick, but we must not fall," said the doctor, looking at the barometer.

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"In any case, Joe, it will do no harm to look to our arms."

"That will not hurt us, certainly, Mr. Dick; we now find what a good thing it was not to have thrown them away."

"I trust I shall never part with my rifle," said Kennedy. And he loaded it carefully, for some ammunition still remained.

"At what height are we now?"

"About 750 feet," replied Ferguson; "but we have no means left to seek a favorable current, and in ascending or descending we are entirely at the mercy of the balloon."

"That is a pity," replied Kennedy, "the wind is so light, and if we had only met a storm similar to that a few days ago, we should soon give these robbers the slip."

"They are following us at their ease," said Joe; "it is only gentle exercise for them."

"If we were within range," said Kennedy, "I could amuse myself by dismounting a few of them."

"Yes; but they might also have the range," said Ferguson, "and our 'Victoria' offers an excellent mark for their long musket bullets, and if they were to tear the silk, I leave you to judge what our fate would be."

The Talibas continued their pursuit all the morning. About 11 A. M. the travelers had made fifteen miles towards the west.

The doctor scanned the smallest cloud on the horizon. He feared a change. If they should happen to be driven towards the Niger, what would become of them? Moreover, the balloon was visibly sinking; since their departure it had already lost more than 300 feet, and the Senegal was still twelve miles away, and at the pace they were traveling it would take three hours to reach it.

At this time their attention was attracted by renewed yells. The Talibas were pressing their horses forward. The doctor consulted the barometer and perceived the cause of these cries.

"We are descending," said Kennedy.

"Yes!" replied Ferguson.

"The devil!" said Joe.

In about a quarter of an hour the car was not more than 150 feet from the ground, but the wind was blowing more strongly now.

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The Talibas spurred their horses, and soon a volley of musketry rent the air.

"Too far, you idiots!" cried Joe. "We had better keep those scamps at arm's length," and taking aim, he fired. One of the Talibas rolled on the ground; his companions pulled up, and the "Victoria" thus gained a little.

"They are prudent," said Kennedy.

"Because they believe themselves sure of us," said the doctor, "and they will succeed if we descend any lower. We must absolutely ascend."

"What is there to be thrown over?" asked Joe.

"All the pemmican that is left. We can thus get rid of 30 lbs. weight."

"There; it is gone, sir," said Joe.

The car, which had been almost touching the ground, ascended again amid the cries of the Talibas; but, half an hour later, the "Victoria" redescended rapidly—the gas pouring from the folds of the silk. The car soon touched the ground; the adherents of Al-Hadji hastened towards it; but, as happened before, scarcely had it touched the earth when the "Victoria" bounded about a mile farther on.

"We shall not escape after all!" cried Kennedy in a rage.

"Throw out the brandy, Joe," cried the doctor; "and the instruments—everything of any weight, and our last anchor. We must do it."

Joe threw away the barometers and thermometers, but these were not much, and the balloon, which had gone up for an instant, soon fell to earth again. The Talibas came flying after it, and were not 200 yards distant now.

"Throw away two of the guns," said the doctor.

"Not until I have discharged them, at least," replied Kennedy.

Four successive shots pierced the crowd of horsemen—four Talibas fell amid the frantic raging of the troop.

The "Victoria" ascended once more, it bounded immense distances, like a great india-rubber ball. A strange sight was that of these unfortunate men seeking to escape by means of these gigantic leaps, and the balloon, Antæus-like, seemed to derive new strength each time it touched the earth. But the end must come. It was nearly noon. The "Victoria" shuddered and collapsed; the envelope be-

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came "flabby" and loose; the plaits of the taffetas distended, rubbing against each other.

"Heaven has abandoned us," said Kennedy. "We must fall."

Joe did not reply—he looked at his master.

"No!" said the latter, "we have still 150 lbs. to throw away."

"What next?" cried Kennedy, thinking the doctor had lost his senses.

"The car," said Ferguson. "We must lash ourselves to the netting, we can hold on to the meshes, and thus reach the river. Quick, quick!"

And these resolute men did not hesitate to seize such a chance of safety. They suspended themselves to the meshes, as the doctor had suggested, and Joe, holding by one hand, with the other cut the cords that fastened the car; it fell at the moment the balloon was definitely lost.

"Hurrah, hurrah!" he cried, as the balloon rose again 300 feet into the air.

The Talibas spurred their horses to full speed, but the "Victoria" encountering a stronger breeze, left them behind, and sailed rapidly away towards a hill which bounded the horizon in the west. This was a very favorable circumstance for the travelers, as they could pass over it, while the band of Al-Hadji would be obliged to take a *détour* towards the north to get round it.

The three friends held tightly to the netting, they had tied it beneath their feet, and so it formed a resting-place.

After having cleared the hill, the doctor suddenly exclaimed, "The river, the Senegal!"

There, at two miles' distance, was the river rolling along in its wide bed. The opposite bank, low and fertile, offered a safe retreat and a convenient spot upon which to descend.

"In another quarter of an hour we shall be saved," cried Ferguson.

But it was not to be. The empty balloon fell by degrees upon a spot almost denuded of vegetation. There were long slopes and stony plains, a few bushes, and thick grass, dried up by the heat of the sun.

The "Victoria" touched the ground many times, and rebounded, but less and less each time. At last it caught by the upper part of the net to the high branches of a

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baobab—an isolated tree in the midst of this desert region.

"It is all over," said Kennedy.

"And within a hundred paces of the river," said Joe.

The three unfortunate travelers descended, and the doctor dragged his two companions to the Senegal.

At this moment they heard a long sullen roar proceeding from the direction of the river, and when they reached the bank Ferguson recognized the cataracts of Gouina. Not a boat upon the river—not a living being to be seen.

The Senegal, 2,000 feet wide, fell here a height of 150 feet with a sonorous roar. It flowed from east to west, and the line of rocks that barred its course stretched from north to south. In the midst of the fall the rocks assumed strange forms, like some antediluvian animals petrified in the midst of the water.

The utter impracticability of this gulf was evident. Kennedy could not restrain a gesture of despair.

But Doctor Ferguson with his old energy cried out, "All is not yet lost!"

"I know that well," replied Joe, with that confidence in his master that never deserted him.

The sight of the dry grass had inspired the doctor with a bold idea. It was the only chance of safety. He drew his companions rapidly towards the balloon.

"We are at least an hour ahead of those robbers," he said; "let us lose no time, my friends; collect a quantity of this dry grass, at least 100 lbs. weight."

"For what purpose?" asked Kennedy.

"I have no more gas, so I will cross the river by means of hot air."

"Ah! my brave Samuel," cried Kennedy, "you are indeed a great man."

Kennedy and Joe set to work, and soon an enormous heap of grass was collected close to the tree. Meantime the doctor had enlarged the opening at the lower part of the balloon and had taken care to let all the hydrogen escape by the valve; he then piled some of the dry grass under the envelope and set fire to it.

A short time suffices to dilate a balloon with hot air; a heat of 180° is sufficient to diminish the weight of the air one-half by rarefaction, so the "Victoria" soon began to reassume her rounded appearance. There was no lack of

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grass, the fire was kept up by the doctor, and the balloon swelled visibly.

It was then a quarter to 1 P. M.

At this moment, two miles to the north, the Talibas reappeared; their cries and the galloping of their horses were distinctly heard.

"In twenty minutes they will be here," said Kennedy.

"More grass, Joe! more grass! In ten minutes we shall be high in the air."

"There is the grass, sir."

The "Victoria" was two-thirds filled.

"My friends, hold on to the netting as before."

"All right," said Kennedy.

In about ten minutes some lunges of the balloon gave indication that she would soon be off.

The Talibas approached, they were scarcely 500 paces distant.

"Hold tight," cried Ferguson.

"Never fear," said his companions.

The doctor's feet pushed more grass into the fire. The balloon, completely filled by the increase of temperature, rose up, brushing the branches of the baobab as it went.

"We're off!" cried Joe.

A volley of musketry was the reply, one bullet even grazed Joe's shoulder; but Kennedy, holding by one hand, discharged his rifle with the other, and an enemy fell.

Cries of rage, impossible to describe, accompanied the ascent; the balloon rose to nearly 800 feet. A rapid wind then seized it, and it oscillated dangerously, while the brave doctor and his friends were obliged to contemplate the cataracts opening beneath them.

Ten minutes afterwards, not a word having been exchanged in the interval, the intrepid travelers descended gradually towards the other bank of the river.

There, surprised and alarmed, stood a group of men wearing the French uniform. Their astonishment may be guessed when they saw a balloon rising from the opposite bank of the river. They fancied it a miracle. But their officers, a lieutenant of marines, and a second lieutenant, were aware, from the accounts in the European papers, of the bold attempt of Doctor Ferguson, and they told the facts to their companions.

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The balloon collapsed by degrees, and was falling with the brave travelers holding to the netting,—they were doubting whether they should ever reach land, when the Frenchmen rushed into the river and received the three Englishmen in their arms at the moment when the "Victoria" sank at some distance from the bank.

"Doctor Ferguson?" cried the lieutenant.

"The same," replied the doctor, quietly, "and his two friends."

The Frenchmen carried the travelers to the bank, while the balloon, still slightly inflated, was borne by the rapid current, like an immense ball, over the cataracts of the Gouina.

"Poor 'Victoria!'" said Joe.

The doctor could not repress a tear. He opened his arms, and he and his friends embraced each other, under the influence of the emotion which affected them all.

CHAPTER XLIV

CONCLUSION

THE expedition which had fallen in with the travelers had been sent by the governor of Senegal. It was composed of two officers, M. Dufraisse, a lieutenant of marines, and M. Rodamel, a second lieutenant, with a sergeant and seven men. For the last two days they had been engaged in seeking the most favorable situation for the establishment of a station at Gouina, when they were witnesses of the arrival of Doctor Ferguson.

One can easily imagine the congratulations which were extended to the travelers. The French being in a position to testify to the accomplishment of the bold design, naturally became witnesses for Doctor Ferguson, when he asked them to testify officially to his arrival at the cataracts of Gouina.

"You will not refuse to sign an official statement, I daresay?" the doctor said to Lieutenant Dufraisse.

"I am ready, whenever you please," replied the latter.

The English were conducted to a guard-house on the bank of the river, where they experienced the greatest attention, and were well entertained. There was drawn

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up the official testimony, which is in the archives of the Geographical Society to this day.

"We, the undersigned, declare that on the said day, we saw arrive here, suspended to the netting of a balloon, Doctor Ferguson, and his two companions, Richard Kennedy and Joseph Wilson. The said balloon fell at a few yards distant from us into the river, and was carried away by the current over the cataracts of the Gouina. In testimony whereof we have hereto set our names. Done at the cataracts of the Gouina on this twenty-fourth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two. 1862

"(*Signed*) SAMUEL FERGUSON,
RICHARD KENNEDY,
JOSEPH WILSON.
DUFRAISSE, *Lieutenant.*
RODAMEL, *Second Lieutenant.*
DUFAYS, *Sergeant.*
FLIPPEAU,
MAYOR,
PELISSIER,
LOROIS, *Soldiers*
RASCAGNET,
GUILLON,
LEBEL,

Here terminated the wonderful journey of Dr. Ferguson and his brave companions. They found themselves amongst friends, in the midst of hospitable tribes, whence communications with the French stations are frequent.

They reached the Senegal on Saturday, the 24th of May, and on the 27th they reached Médine, situated upon the river a little more to the north. Here the French officers received them with open arms, and extended to them all the hospitality in their power. It was found that the travelers could embark almost immediately in the steamer *Basilisk*, which was going down the river.

Fourteen days afterwards, on the 10th of June, they reached St. Louis, where the governor welcomed them heartily; they had by this time quite recovered from their fatigues. Joe told all who would listen to him that, "It was not much of a journey after all, and if anyone is anxious for excitement I would not advise him to undertake such an one; it becomes tedious at last, and indeed,

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without the adventures on Lake Tchad and at the Senegal, I verily believe we should have died of *ennui.*"

An English frigate was about to sail, and the three travelers were taken on board. On the 25th of June they arrived at Portsmouth, and on the following day they reached London. We shall not attempt to describe the welcome they received from the Royal Geographical Society, nor the cordiality of their general reception. Kennedy set out for Edinburgh with his famous rifle to reassure his old housekeeper of his existence.

Doctor Ferguson and his faithful Joe are still the same, although change has come upon them; they have become friends—no longer master and servant.

The European journals were unanimous in their praises of the explorers, and the *Daily Telegraph* issued 977,000 copies on the day they published an extract from the journals of the voyage.

Doctor Ferguson read the account of the expedition at a public meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, and the Gold Medal was bestowed upon him and his two companions, for having achieved the most remarkable expedition of the year 1862.

The result of the journey of Doctor Ferguson was to confirm in the most precise manner the facts and statements reported by Barth, Burton, Speke, and others. Thanks to the still more recent expeditions of Speke and Grant, Heuglin and Munzinger, who ascended to the sources of the Nile, where they spread towards the center of Africa, we shall soon be able to confirm in their turn Doctor Ferguson's own discoveries in that immense territory comprised between the fourteenth and thirty-third degree of longitude.

THE END

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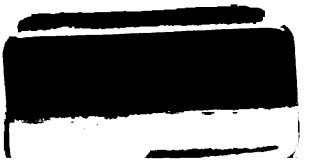

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